

**Generalized Land Use Element**

○ **Growth and Development (LU-6)**

**Intent** - The city will continue to be the focal point of growth for the greater Tacoma area and a growth center for the region and the state. As such, growth and development should be coordinated with the policies of Pierce County, the Puget Sound region and the State of Washington. It is intended that growth and development occur in an orderly and desirable manner in accordance with citizen needs and desires, the physical characteristics of the land and the City's ability to provide the necessary services.

Medium and high intensity uses will be encouraged to develop in concentrations in order to better use the land, limit the spread of higher intensity development, protect low intensity residential neighborhoods and enable the economical provision of public facilities and services.

New development should be compatible and “fit in” with the character and nature of existing development. Compatible developments would possess attributes similar and consistent with the main or essential characteristics exhibited by surrounding developments. These characteristics may include building shape and style, orientation and setbacks, architectural details, circulation patterns, location of parking, landscaping, open spaces and streetscape. This does not mean that dissimilar uses cannot be located in the same area, but rather these uses must be designed, scaled and situated in such a way that they are capable of existing in a harmonious manner. An appropriate location for dissimilar uses would be on sites possessing characteristics such as a natural buffer, a location between different intensity levels of development, or a location on a higher volume arterial.

**LU-GGD-2 Growth Rate**

Foster orderly, desirable growth in appropriate locations at a rate consistent with citizen desires and the provision of adequate services and facilities.

**LU-GGD-4 Development Timing**

Direct development in accordance with tier designations to ensure that it is timed and properly located so as not to prematurely change undeveloped land to urban uses nor intensify the development inconsistent with the character of an area.

**LU-GGD-5 Concurrent Provision of Services**

Development shall be approved only if adequate public facilities or services needed to serve the development are available at the time the demand for the facility or service is created or within a reasonable time as approved by the city.

---

<sup>1</sup>Selected sections from the City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan dated 12/3/02 (Ordinance #27014), 11/16/04 (Ordinance #27295), and 11/15/05 (Ordinance #27430).

**LU-GGD-6 Level of Service**

No development shall be approved which would result in a reduction in the adopted level of service standard for any needed public facility or service.

**LU-GGD-7 Inter-jurisdictional Coordination**

Work in cooperation with Pierce County, other cities and towns, special districts and other public agencies to address land use development and service issues of mutual concern.

o **Urban Aesthetics and Design (LU-11)**

**Intent** - It is the desire of the city to promote and inspire design excellence. The image of Tacoma perceived by residents and visitors is based upon public and private development, the natural environment and the variety of activities and attractions available in which people can participate and enjoy. Tacoma aspires to be pedestrian-oriented and understands the importance of human scale, pedestrian access and circulation to the livability of the city. The built environment defines the habitability and the well being of community. Contrast and harmony are qualities that provide interest to the design of public and private buildings. Public squares and assembly points provide areas for community activities and serve as focal points. Street furniture, landscaping, lighting and artworks are elements of the pedestrian environment and define the character of the streetscape. Safety and security are major considerations. Sensitively designed new development and redevelopment which emphasizes the importance of aesthetics in design with respect to scale, proportion and the use of compatible materials can further enhance Tacoma’s built environment.

**LU-UAD-1 Design and Aesthetics**

Emphasize good design and aesthetics by recognizing and retaining existing scale, proportion and rhythm and using compatible materials in new development and redevelopment.

**LU-UAD-2 Encourage Landscaping**

Encourage the use of landscaping for buffer, screening and beautification purposes. Encourage the use of drought tolerant species to conserve water and ensure plant survival.

o **Residential Development (LU-18 – LU-20)**

**Intent** - The single-family detached house, that is, a single home on an individual lot, is the most predominant type of residential structure in the city. It is the preferred living mode for many people and is associated with a relatively quiet and stable neighborhood environment. Other types of housing such as duplexes, apartments, townhomes and condominiums are also needed and desired by large segments of the population. Housing choices are influenced by income, family size, age, lifestyles, and other factors and can change during a person's lifetime. A wide variety of housing types are needed within a community to serve the varied needs of residents.

It is intended that higher intensity residential development locate within mixed-use centers and in concentrations along some major transportation corridors in areas of similar character and intensity.

Density within most predominately single-family neighborhoods will stay at or near existing levels. Density may increase slightly in some neighborhoods as a result of infill development and the development of accessory unit housing. Densities will be higher in medium and high intensity areas than those found in low intensity residential areas.

As used in this document, density is the number of dwelling units per acre, less allowances for street and public and quasi-public uses (dwelling units/net acre). The percentage of land needed for streets and other uses varies in different locations of the city depending on the amount of vacant land, the number and width of streets, and the existing development pattern. Tacoma has many unique neighborhoods. The identity of these neighborhoods has been established through the recognition of landmarks and special or community features located in the neighborhood. The character of the neighborhoods can be further enhanced and enriched through the emphasis of these elements. The use of design elements such as signs, landscaping, special paving and public spaces can all help to reinforce the uniqueness of a neighborhood.

It is intended that the viability of residential areas will be strengthened by eliminating incompatible land uses, protecting natural physical features, promoting quality design and encouraging repair and rehabilitation of existing residential structures. Adequate streets and public facilities are also important to meet the needs of the citizens living in residential areas. The viability of the city's urban residential areas is essential if they are to continue to provide an acceptable alternative to suburban living.

To provide further protection of single-family areas, design guidelines for multiple-family developments are to be used in conjunction with adopted policies when considering applications for multiple-family development. The design guidelines are intended to mitigate potential impacts and to insure compatibility with the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

**LU-RDG-1 Protect Established Residential Areas**

Protect, preserve and maintain established residential neighborhood areas where a definite density, housing type and character prevail; nuisances and incompatible land uses should not be allowed to penetrate these areas.

**LU-RDG-3 Stress Natural Qualities**

Stress the natural physical qualities of our city (for example, trees, marine view and natural features) in locating and developing residential areas, provided such development can be built without adversely impacting the natural areas.

**LU-RDG-5 Large Scale Residential Developments**

Encourage development techniques for large scale residential developments that make better use of the land, allow a mix of housing types, provide for efficient service delivery, promote design flexibility, and preserve open space.

**LU-RDG-6 Innovative Development**

Encourage residential development of mixed structural type and design, as well as unique building and site arrangements to increase affordable housing options and achieve appropriate densities provided that the development is compatible and the desirable characteristics of the surrounding area are maintained.

**LU-RDG-7 Encourage Maintenance and Revitalization of Neighborhoods**

Encourage the preservation and/or maintenance of sound, viable neighborhoods and the revitalization of those that are declining.

**LU-RDG-12 Adequate and Safe Circulation Facilities**

Require sufficient rights-of-way, street improvements, access control, circulation routes, off-street parking and safe bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways for residential developments.

**LU-RDG-13 Public Services and Facilities**

Residential areas should have convenient access to public transportation, parks and open space, schools, and community facilities.

**LU-RDG-17 Vegetation Planning**

Encourage the selection and location of landscaping on public and private property that minimizes view blockage when planted and when fully grown.

**LU-RDG-19 Neighbor Cooperation**

Encourage neighboring property owners to work together to preserve individual property views.

- **Low Intensity (LU-23 – LU-24)**

**Intent** - Low intensity residential development is the most prevalent type of development in the city. The predominance of single-family detached houses on individual lots and a relatively quiet neighborhood environment are characteristic of low intensity residential areas. Low intensity residential areas include areas developed exclusively as single-family housing as well as areas developed with a limited mixture of other uses but still predominantly single-family in character. Large scale residential development projects which maintain a low density but permit varying types of structures such as low-scale apartments, townhouses, duplexes and single-family detached housing may be appropriate in low intensity areas.

Major portions of low intensity residential areas have been further designated as Single-Family Detached Housing Areas. These areas are identified on the *Generalized Land Use Plan Map*. A specific intent and policies that severely limit the kind of development that can take place within designated single-family detached housing areas is included on the following pages.

Within the remaining low intensity areas, some duplexes and triplexes may be present in appropriate locations. Planned residential districts of compatible low densities and limited, low density garden court apartments, small scale, neighborhood commercial establishments and community facilities may also be present.

Larger areas of mixed residential uses may accommodate new duplex development or the redevelopment of existing housing stock as duplexes, provided the character of the area is maintained and the physical limitations of the site are considered.

It is intended that the kind, number and scale of these other uses will be limited in order to protect the existing character of low intensity residential areas and also to allow for the continued development of single-family homes. These other uses, when permitted, will usually be located along arterial streets. It is recognized that the majority of land along arterial streets has already been developed as single-family detached housing and will remain as such. In certain instances, however, other uses (as mentioned above) may be appropriate along these arterials. It is recognized that duplex, triplex and small garden court apartment development along higher volume arterials may be appropriate and desirable; however such developments would need to be compatible with surrounding land uses and structures. These other uses will be subject to policies that insure they are properly located and compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Overall densities for a low intensity residential area may vary and can range up to about fifteen dwelling units per gross acre. Density will vary depending on the nature and location of development, the physical limitations of the site, the existing development pattern, and the characteristics of the surrounding area.

Low intensity residential development may be appropriate in some instances on the City's steep slopes. Development on private steep slope properties is intended to be limited to very low-density, provided that maximum retention of open space is accomplished and soil stability maintained. A special intent discussion and policies are provided for the development of private steep slope properties.

**LU-RDLI-1 Other Compatible Development**

Allow other compatible development, provided the general character of the area is maintained and development standards are applied.

**LU-RDLI-6 Innovative Development**

Permit the innovative development of large-scale low-density residential projects consisting of varied housing types in appropriate locations within low intensity residential areas provided the density; design and scale are compatible with the character of surrounding properties.

o **Commercial Development (LU-25)**

**LU-CDLA-3 Outdoor Recreational Facilities**

Locate commercial recreational facilities of an outdoor nature, such as mini-golf courses and driving ranges, on tracts of land that are open and are compatible with other open space uses or in areas of unstable soil conditions.

**Housing Element**

o **Neighborhood Quality (H-9)**

**Intent** - The policy intent is to protect, preserve and enhance both single-family and multiple-family neighborhoods by supporting the characteristics that make these residential areas safe, healthy and livable as stated in the City's Strategic Plan. It is also generally assumed that established neighborhoods, especially single-family detached housing areas, will continue to increase their demands for protection from incompatible land uses or nuisances. Over the years, Neighborhood Councils have worked to address a myriad of needs ranging from the funding of small projects using innovative grants to funding of larger capital projects using a combination of public and private resources.

**H-NQ-1 Neighborhood Investment**

Provide neighborhood improvements and investment that considers the needs of individual neighborhoods including keeping areas crime free and aesthetically appealing for residents. Support the upgrading and maintenance of public infrastructure.

**H-NQ-2 Neighborhood Infill Housing**

Encourage infill housing that is compatible with abutting housing styles and with the character of the existing residential neighborhood. Focus housing within areas identified for residential growth and promote privacy from nearby units and public areas.

### **H-NQ-3 Historic/Cultural Amenities**

Identify, protect and enhance cultural, architectural, historic and scenic resources within residential areas. Support the rehabilitation of architecturally or historically significant homes as well as other landmark residential and mixed-use buildings while maintaining public safety and historic character.

- **Housing Choice (H-10 – H-11)**

**Intent** - The policy intent is to promote a range of housing types that meet the diverse needs of all households in the city. While the general housing preference continues to be single-family detached homes, future residential development must take into consideration less available land as well as the demands of a population that includes students, aging “baby boomers”, low income and persons with special needs. Specifically, the City will encourage a mixture of housing types ranging from higher density apartments and condominiums located in or near major employment centers such as downtown to single family homes in neighborhoods.

One consequence of this changing population has been a gradual reduction in the average household size with more people living alone. Many “baby boomers” that are approaching retirement are starting to reduce the size of their housing increasing the demand for smaller housing units that are located near transit, parks, shopping and many other conveniences. It is important the City begins to address this changing demographic and provide a variety of housing options for the community.

The City supports the provision of innovative housing types that help reduce housing costs while increasing the supply of housing. This innovation can take many forms including: “infill” housing, cottage housing, townhouses, zero lot line lots, “zipper” lots, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), conversion of nonresidential structures, Planned Residential Development (PRDs) as well as numerous variations in site, design and lot standards. It is also important that additional residential structures be compatible with overall density, intensity and character of established residential neighborhoods.

In particular, the use of ADUs is expected to become a significant option in the housing tool box. This type of housing is useful since it can address a number of needs such as (1) extra income for homeowners who wish to stay in their home; (2) housing for “mother-in-law” family situations; (3) added affordable housing and (4) a less visible accommodation of density.

The City also supports housing development that considers environmental factors such as critical areas (e.g. steep slopes, wetlands, gulches), minimizes the negative impacts on air, soil and water quality and considers factors as limited energy resources, “green” construction and sustainability in the design of new housing.

### **H-HC-1 Innovative Development Techniques**

Promote innovative development techniques to better utilize land, promote design flexibility, preserve open space and natural features and conserve energy resources. Ensure new housing is compatible with the overall density, intensity and character of the area.

### **Capital Facilities Element**

**Intent** - It is the intent of the City to provide adequate public facilities and services, as efficiently and cost-effective as possible, to serve both existing and new development. Such

facilities and services will be designed to meet the capital facility needs of the community and to support Tacoma's land use growth and development concept. In situations where the public facility is not owned directly by the City, the City will encourage the provision of adequate services and coordinate with the responsible agency.

Currently, there are twenty-three (23) types of facilities and services that the City provides or coordinates with other service providers to provide. Thirteen (13) of them are referred to as “public facilities” in the Growth Management Act and the County-wide Planning Policies, and are subject to the requirement of the City’s concurrency management ordinance (TMC 13.16). They are roads, transit, potable water, electric utilities, sanitary sewer, solid waste, stormwater management, law enforcement, fire, emergency medical service, schools, parks and libraries. The other ten (10) are not subject to concurrency because their needs are not as directly related to existing population or growth in the city. These facilities include the airport, railway, port facilities, municipal buildings, municipal parking facilities, convention facilities, public assembly buildings, telecommunications, economic and community improvement, and community and human service.

The level of service (LOS) standards for all the above facilities are shown in the following tables. For facilities subject to concurrency, LOS standards are used to determine the need for such facilities, test the adequacy of such facilities to serve proposed development concurrent with the impacts of the development, and ensure that appropriate levels of capital resources are allocated. For facilities not subject to concurrency, LOS standards are helpful as a management tool.

<b>Capital Facilities (Subject to Concurrency)</b>	<i>Level of Service Standard</i>
Electric Utilities	Voltage level + or - 5%; Average annual system outage duration 75 minutes or less
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	.000016 units per capita
Fire	.000109 apparatus per capita
Law Enforcement	.288580 square feet per capita
Library	.06 square feet per circulation
Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local</li> <li>• Regional</li> <li>• Open Space/Wildlife Habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .003 acres per capita</li> <li>• .007 acres per capita</li> <li>• .002 acres per capita</li> </ul>
Roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arterial Corridors</li> <li>• Port Area Arterials &amp; All Other Arterials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% arterial lane miles LOS “E” (.99 or better volume to capacity ratio)</li> <li>• 85% arterial lane miles LOS “D” (.89 or better volume to capacity ratio)</li> </ul>
Sanitary Sewers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum Month Flow</li> <li>• Peak Hydraulic or Peak Instantaneous Flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 200 gallons per capita per day (GPCD)</li> <li>• 400 gallons per capita per day (GPCD)</li> </ul>
Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary (K-5th grade)</li> <li>• Middle (6th grade)</li> <li>• Middle (7th-8th grade)</li> <li>• High (9th grade)</li> <li>• High (10th-12th grade)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 square feet per student</li> <li>• 90 square feet per student</li> <li>• 110 square feet per student</li> <li>• 110 square feet per student</li> <li>• 130 square feet per student</li> </ul>
Solid Waste	1.13 tons per capita per year

<b>Capital Facilities (Subject to Concurrency)</b>	<i>Level of Service Standard</i>
Storm Water Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drains &lt; 24"</li> <li>• Drains &gt; 24"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 year, 24 hour design storm</li> <li>• 25 year, 24 hour design storm</li> </ul>
Transit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auto Park &amp; Ride Stalls</li> <li>• Fixed Route Vehicles</li> <li>• Shuttle Vehicles</li> <li>• Vanpool Vehicles</li> <li>• Transit Center Bays</li> </ul>	<i>(Per capita)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .00387</li> <li>• .0003132</li> <li>• .0001325</li> <li>• .0001704</li> <li>• .0001233</li> </ul>
Water (Potable)	562 gallons per day per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)

<b>Capital Facilities (NOT subject to Concurrency)</b>	<i>Level of Service Standard</i>
Airport	100% of FAA requirement; 230,000 take-offs and landings
Economic and Community Improvement	As needed
Municipal Buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Government</li> <li>• Community and Human Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .88 square feet per capita</li> <li>• As needed</li> </ul>
Municipal Parking Facilities	As needed
Municipal Railway ( <i>Tacoma Rail</i> )	1.07 track feet per car ( <i>staging yard</i> )
Port Terminal and Yard Facilities	4,200 twenty foot equivalent unit containers per acre
Public Assembly Buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition and Convention</li> <li>• Theaters, Arenas and Stadiums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .988827 square feet per capita</li> <li>• .180477 seats per capita</li> </ul>
Telecommunications ( <i>Click! Network</i> )	As needed

**CF-APFS-1 Public Facilities**

Maintain level of service standards for each type of public facility and provide capital improvements needed to achieve and maintain the standards for existing and future populations.

**CF-APFS-2 Concurrency**

Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy or use, or within a reasonable time as approved by the City, without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

**CF-APFS-3 Level of Service**

No development shall be approved which would result in a reduction in the adopted level of service standard for any needed public facility or service.

**CF-APFS-5 Growth Concept and Tiers**

Provide facilities and services that are consistent with and support the growth and development concept and the designation of growth tiers.

## **Environmental Policy Element**

### ○ **General Policies (E-4 - E-7)**

#### **Environmental – Natural Features**

**Intent** - The city's unique natural features are a visual and aesthetic asset to the community. Lakes, streams, slopes, and gulches are highly valued for their aesthetic quality and recreational opportunities. These natural features also provide valuable ecological functions as well. Therefore, growth and development should be in harmony with the environment in order to prudently protect these features for the benefit of as many citizens as possible.

##### **E-ENF-1 Natural Features Value**

Recognize the value of natural features of the land within the urban environment; conserve as many natural features as is possible and appropriate. Natural features are not only important for ecological reasons but they both possess educational and recreational values as well.

##### **E-ENF-2 Preservation of Natural Resources**

Preserve through programs of acquisition, easement, design standards and zoning an optimum amount of the City's desirable natural features for public purposes. Included would be steep slope areas, water frontage, wooded areas, aquatic lands and other unique and significant natural areas.

##### **E-ENF-3 Environmental Considerations**

Emphasize careful planning in growth and development activities in order that the City's natural features may be preserved, soil stability maintained and renewable and non-renewable resources protected.

#### **Growth and Development**

**Intent** - The city will continue to be the focal point of growth for the greater Tacoma area and a growth center for the region and the state. It is intended that growth and development occur in an orderly and desirable manner in accordance with citizen needs and desires, the physical characteristics of the land.

##### **E-GD-1 Site Planning**

Encourage site planning and construction techniques that maintain natural landforms, retain native vegetation, and preserve open space.

##### **E-GD-2 Development Hazards**

Discourage development on lands where such development would pose hazards to life or property, or where important ecological functions or environmental quality would be adversely affected: (a) floodways of 100-year floodplains, (b) erosion hazard areas, (c) landslide hazards areas, (d) unique or significant wetlands or stream corridors, (e) fish and wildlife conservation areas and (f) seismic hazard areas.

##### **E-GD-4 Educational/Aesthetic Appearance**

Encourage regulations or development limitations within areas of recognized educational, anthropological, historical, biological or aesthetic significance to avoid irreversible damage to such areas.

## **Recreation and Open Space**

**Intent** - Recreation and open space facilities including playgrounds, parks, public school sites, open space corridors, public golf courses, scenic or historic routes, bikeways, trails and conservation areas.

### **E-ROS-3 Desirable Open Spaces**

Preserve and maintain through easement, acquisition or other appropriate means, desired open space areas such as steep slopes, scenic view areas, water frontage, wooded areas, unique natural features, and historic areas taking care to provide a proper balance between retaining these areas and private development.

### **E-ROS-4 Open Space Uses**

In recognition of their ecological, conservational, recreational and educational values, preserve and maintain open spaces for bird and small animal habitats, green areas in urbanized neighborhoods, green separations between dissimilar land use districts, and aesthetic purposes.

### **E-ROS-5 Private Open Space**

Encourage the retention or preservation of private open space through such programs as the Open Space Current Use Assessment Program.

## **Scenic Areas**

**Intent** - Urban aesthetics and design encompasses all aspects of the physical and natural environment of a city. Quality design, historic preservation, and preservation of natural areas can give citizens a sense of time and place within their environment and pride in their community.

### **E-SA-1 Scenic Sites and Vistas**

Develop and maintain a system of scenic view sites and vistas in order to take advantage of the natural beauty of Tacoma and its siting in the Puget Sound Region.

### **E-SA-2 Tree Trimming**

Permit the trimming or removal of trees or vegetation from natural open space areas only if it can be accomplished in accordance with the Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance or established regulations for view preservation or if it can be proven that the trees or vegetation are a detriment to the ecology or aesthetic appearance of the area or that they present an unsafe condition.

### **E-SA-3 View Corridors**

View corridors which can link the City and the water should be preserved or created.

### **E-SA-4 Promote Steep Slope Views**

Recognize, protect and promote the visual qualities and the view potential offered by steep slope areas.

### **E-SA-5 Preservation Large Trees/ Existing Views**

Preserve, wherever and whenever feasible, large existing trees within residential neighborhoods and select and locate new trees to preserve existing views.

### **E-SA-6 Design and Aesthetics**

Emphasize good design and aesthetics with respect to scale, proportion and the use of compatible materials in new development and redevelopment within the City.

**E-SA-7 Encourage Private Covenants**

Encourage the establishment of private covenants to control height and vegetation in new plats to promote view preservation.

**E-SA-9 Vegetation Planning**

Encourage the selection and location of landscaping on public and private property that minimizes view blockage when planted and when fully grown.

**E-SA-10 Vegetation Control**

In limited instances, where appropriate, and after City approval, permit private individuals to provide for the trimming, thinning or removal of vegetation on public property where views are obstructed or other circumstances may warrant.

**E-SA-11 Neighbor Cooperation**

Encourage neighboring property owners to work together to preserve individual property views.

**Recreation and Open Space Facilities Element**

**Public Recreation and Open Space Standards**

Public recreation and open space facilities in Tacoma are owned and/or operated by Metro Parks Tacoma, the Tacoma School District, or the City of Tacoma. Existing facilities include parks, playgrounds, improved school sites, trails, bikeways, gulches, steep slopes, waterfront and other areas. Categories of public recreation and open space facilities considered in this *Recreation and Open Space Facilities (ROSF) Element* are described below. Due to the wide variety of uses at some sites, it is impossible to fit all sites into a specific category, and some sites may fit into more than one category.

<b>Minimum Standard:</b>	varies
<b>Population Size:</b>	.007 acres per capita
<b>Service Radius:</b>	30+ minutes driving time

**Regional Parks**

Regional parks are facilities that provide regional attractions such as a zoo, aquarium, arboretum, waterfront parks, special use areas, or other distinctive features. Other elements may included: paths, picnic areas, restrooms, concessions, environmental education, educational exhibits, landscaping, gardens, amphitheater, hard surface play area, play equipment, athletic complexes, stables, golf courses, day camps, overnight camping, natural areas, native plantings, wildlife areas and waterfront access.

**Development Concept**

The concept is to locate, acquire, develop, and improve a good distribution of both neighborhood and citywide recreation and open space areas, which provide for a variety of

recreation opportunities and are easily accessible. [ . . . ] A variety of facilities and programs will be needed to accommodate youth, families, seniors, and employees, including those whose ability to travel may be limited, such as seniors, children, and the disabled.

- **General Recreation and Open Space (ROS-10 – ROS-11)**

**Intent** - It is important to recognize the unique attributes of Tacoma's location in the Pacific Northwest, the Puget Sound region, and on Commencement Bay in the provision and improvement of recreation and open space facilities. The City's diversity of natural settings offers many opportunities for a variety of recreation and open space areas, including parks, playgrounds, gulches, steep slopes, scenic view sites, historic areas, shoreline and wetland areas, and other natural open spaces.

It is intended that some of these sites may be fully developed while others may receive little or no development or may be left in a natural state. Development of sites and facilities should be accessible to all persons, and provide a wide variety of activities. The location of sites must also be considered in order to ensure that all areas of the City are equitably served by recreation facilities and services. It is intended that recreation and open space areas reflect sensitivity to conservation, aesthetics, natural resources and the environment while promoting efficiency and compatibility of uses. It is also intended that open space corridors be established to link these areas together as much as possible.

Existing revenue sources for improving recreation and open space areas may not be sufficient to meet the demand. Obtaining funds for recreation and open space acquisition, development, improvement and rehabilitation is necessary to maintain and enhance existing facilities.

**ROS-G-1 Recreational Distribution**

Design and locate appropriate recreational developments, facilities and services within areas demonstrating a need for such facilities and services taking care to serve all people fairly and equitably.

**ROS-G-3 Design and Development**

Promote design and development of recreation and open space facilities that provide for play that will enhance Tacoma's natural setting and that complement the ecology and unique features of the site or area.

**ROS-G-4 Scenic Sites and Vistas**

Develop and maintain a system of scenic view sites and vistas in order to take advantage of the natural beauty of Tacoma and its siting in the Puget Sound Region.

**ROS-G-6 Multiple Use**

Encourage compatible, multiple use of open space and recreation facilities.

**Joint Use and Planning (ROS-11 – ROS-12)**

**Intent** - Inflation, tight budgets, increased service demands, and high costs of development, operation, and maintenance are making necessary "joint use" or "cooperative arrangements."

Joint planning has merit. Joint development may represent a cost savings. Joint use of recreation and open space facilities is essential. Joint operation and maintenance of facilities should be explored when feasible.

In 1944, the Park Board and School Board adopted a statement outlining cooperation so that resources of the two districts could be used to produce a "unified program of recreation for the City of Tacoma." In 1979, to reaffirm this commitment and joint-use principles, the Tacoma School District Board of Directors and the Metro Parks Tacoma Board of Commissioners adopted unanimously a formal "Joint Use Policy Agreement."

Private organizations and businesses can also contribute to the provision of recreation and open space facilities through donations, dedication of land, sponsorship of activities, and other means. The involvement of those outside of government can substantially reduce public expenditures and increase recreational opportunities. It is intended that cooperative use be employed whenever possible to increase public benefit.

#### **ROS-JU-2 Private Sector**

Encourage private citizens, businesses, organizations, and others to provide recreation and open space facilities for public purposes by the dedication of land, donations to programs, and sponsorship of activities whenever appropriate.

#### **Open Space Areas/Corridors (ROS-12 – ROS-14)**

**Intent** - The intent of the Growth Management Act recognizes the important value and function that open space plays in the overall growth of a community. The Act further states that each county and city identifies open space corridors and between urban growth areas. These lands should be useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails and connection of critical areas that are often linear in nature.

Although many areas of Tacoma are highly developed, certain sections remain as open space conservation areas. The majority of these areas are located in nature areas and along steep slopes. The size of an open space area can vary from several hundred acres at Point Defiance Park to a few hundred square feet of steep slope. Open space conservation areas provide continuous green belts of natural vegetation, act as buffers in highly urbanized areas, and are fish and wildlife habitat areas.

The primary open space conservation objectives are: 1) preservation of wildlife habitats; 2) preservation of visual and physical access to natural scenic areas; 3) protection of steep slope areas; and 4) restoration of degraded habitat areas, wetlands, and streams.

The intent is to preserve these areas as open space, wherever possible, recognizing that some development may occur on privately owned land. Public acquisition of desirable open space property is encouraged in order to ensure its retention as an undeveloped area; to ensure the survival of wildlife species; and to protect these areas from future landslides, dumping and filling.

Nature areas and steep slope areas can provide forms of recreation not generally found in other public lands, such as hiking and nature studies. Many of the most attractive parks of the area are located within steep slope areas, which are unusable for urban development. McKinley Park is an example of a park in a steep slope setting.

To date, little development has occurred within nature areas and steep slope areas due to the availability of more suitable building sites and the high costs of steep slope construction. However, as urbanization continues and land becomes scarce, pressures to develop these properties will increase. Despite the potential of many slope sites, a certain element of hazard may exist if they are developed. While it is desirable to preserve nature areas and steep slopes as open space, it is recognized that a majority of these properties are privately owned and some low intensity development such as housing may occur.

Integrating nature areas and steep slope areas into a pedestrian/bikeway trail system, that links various points of interest in the city is very desirable. An example is the "Bayside Trails," a pedestrian trail, traverses partly through Garfield Gulch nature area and connects Pacific Avenue, Stadium Way, Division Avenue, Stadium High School, Schuster Parkway, Garfield Park and the Old Town Dock. Only a small portion of steep slope and nature areas has been preserved under public control. It is intended that additional properties be secured through acquisition or easement for trail development and conservation purposes.

Although considered wastelands by many, marshes, ponds and other wetlands are extremely important to the food chain; many species of both animal and plant life depends on this wet environment for existence. Birds and waterfowl choose these locations for nesting places. In addition, these wetland areas are important as ground water recharge areas and have tremendous flood control value.

**ROS-AC-1 Open Space Values**

Recognize the ecological, conservation, recreational, aesthetic, and educational values of open spaces.

**ROS-AC-2 Desirable Open Spaces**

Recognize that lands desirable for public open space purposes are diverse and include steep slopes; scenic view areas; water frontage; wooded areas; unique natural features; drumlins; gulches; wetlands and streams; shorelines; greenbelts; gardens; plazas; landscaped corridors; fish and wildlife habitats; aquifer recharge areas, flood hazard areas; geologically hazardous areas; recreational areas; historic areas; undeveloped or derelict land, land abutting open space areas, strategically located lands and other areas.

**ROS-AC-8 Balance Open Space and Development**

Balance the public desire for open space areas with the need to provide for private development.

**ROS-AC-9 Promote Steep Slope Views**

Recognize, protect and promote the visual qualities and the view potential offered by steep slope areas.

**ROS-AC-10 Open Space Corridors**

Recognize that open space corridors or linear open spaces can provide visual or physical connections between neighborhoods, centers, and open space areas and strive to protect lands which can physically and functionally link other open spaces.

**ROS-AC-13 Wildlife Migration**

Encourage the protection and retention of natural open space corridors as wildlife habitats and as corridors for their movement.

## **ROS-AC-17 Recreation Site Design**

Promote design and development of recreation and open space facilities that enhance Tacoma's natural setting and that complement the ecology and unique features of the site or area.

### **Neighborhood Element**

#### ○ **Purpose and Intent**

The primary purpose of the Neighborhood Element is to provide a vision and policies unique to each neighborhood in the context of the City's overall growth and development vision. The neighborhood vision and area policies supplement other policies of the Comprehensive Plan and provide more specific guidance for land use decisions. The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide neighborhoods with an additional tool to guide development. If a conflict arises between policies found in the Neighborhood Element and a citywide policy, the neighborhood policies shall prevail.

#### Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Community Profile (Neigh-17)

Located in the extreme northeast section of Tacoma with most of its housing developed since World War II, Northeast Tacoma is both physically and socially separate from the rest of the city. With most of its population and housing arriving since 1980, the area represents a community of new residential subdivisions comprising a large number of family households with homeownership, incomes and education well above city averages. As remaining subdivisions are completed, future growth will be confined given the focus on single-family zoning and the limitations of the remaining undeveloped land that includes steep slopes, canyons and gulches. Since a few major employers exist in or near Northeast Tacoma, the vast majority of residents commute to employment opportunities, especially in King County. With older and/or uncompleted arterial streets, circulation needs have become a key concern.

#### ○ **Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Area Vision (Neigh-17)**

The vision for the residents of Northeast Tacoma, as represented in the Northeast Tacoma Action Strategy, is:

“A low-density residential district with limited commercial and multifamily development, focusing on the automobile for transportation, with access to recreational activities, open space as well as basic public and private facilities and services.”

##### ● **Residential Development**

The vision stresses a predominance of single-family detached type housing. This means infilling of the vacant areas within existing single-family detached housing areas with the same type of housing. It also means that additional areas will be developed as single-family detached housing areas.

Limited duplex and triplex type housing and other low density multifamily developments such as townhouses or low rise apartments may be appropriate as a buffer use adjacent to commercial areas. They may also be developed in a very limited basis on sites with unique characteristics, or they may be considered as a part of a Planned Residential District. The design of such developments would be in character with the area in which they are locating, and any adverse features would be minimized.

- **Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Goals and Policies** (Neigh-20-24)

**Goal NET-1 Residential**

Maintain the area's predominant low-density single-family character while preserving the unique natural features associated with living in Northeast Tacoma.

**Policy Intent** - Northeast Tacoma is and will continue to be a predominantly single-family residential community. It is intended that existing single-family residential neighborhoods be preserved and protected from incompatible land uses and that future residential development maintain a single-family detached housing type. It is recognized that limited development of duplex, triplex, and other multiple-family housing (e.g. townhouses, condominiums) may be appropriate under certain circumstances. Such housing should be located within medium or other low intensity areas as a buffer between commercial and single-family developments with direct access to an arterial street and/or be developed under the Planned Residential Development (PRD) district concept. While single-person, young married or elderly households may desire such housing, such multifamily developments should be scaled in terms of building size and bulk, design, and landscaping to fit the area and not cause an adverse impact to the existing single-family neighborhoods. All residential developments should retain or establish vegetation that is visually attractive to the area.

Unique features (e.g. steep slopes) should be preserved, acknowledging there may be some limited development on certain developable portions. Any development on steep slopes, however, must be low density, generally no greater than three dwelling units per acre, minimize any adverse environmental impacts and be unobtrusive to the surrounding area. Existing housing located directly above on the cliff must be protected from negative impacts.

The policy intent is to encourage continued development of single-family housing and to protect the Northeast Tacoma area from other types of development that would adversely affect or change its character. Positive qualities associated with single-family areas include low density, compatibility of structures, sense of openness, low traffic volume and small scale structures. While some unique sites may be desirable or appropriate for development other than single-family housing, future development should take into consideration other existing policies including the preservation of steep slopes. The viability of single-family detached housing areas depends upon maintaining these characteristics and new development should be sited and scaled to blend with it.

**Policy NET-1.2 Visual Attractiveness**

Residential developments should either maintain the existing natural vegetation or provide new landscaping adding to the area's sense of open space.

**Policy NET-1.3 Minimum Lot Sizes**

Encourage single-family subdivision developers to provide minimum lot sizes equal to or greater in size than average lot sizes in existing single-family subdivisions. If there are no subdivisions, the maximum should be eight lots to the acre.

**Goal NET-4 Recreation and Open Space**

Provide a range of recreational and open space opportunities to the residents of Northeast Tacoma consistent with the changing needs of the area.

**Policy Intent** –Twenty years ago, open space in Northeast Tacoma was abundant in both form and variety, but subsequent residential development has consumed much of the land. In addition, remaining large parcels have been generally developed into large residential subdivisions. To provide the necessary recreation and open space amenities, it is imperative that existing park projects be completed, that new recreational opportunities be identified and that remaining open space (e.g. slopes, gulches) be retained to help maintain the area’s quality of life. The intent is to enhance the provision of open space and recreational opportunities with both public and private resources. Properties located adjacent to existing parks, steep slopes and remaining undeveloped gulches need to be targeted for open space acquisition. Recreationally deficient areas such as Upper Browns Point, Harbor Ridge and Northwood should be given special consideration. Also essential will be a good working relationship between those who provide opportunities (e.g. Metro Parks, Tacoma School District, City of Tacoma) and those residents who use the facilities and services. Improvements to key recreational facilities such as Norpoint Community Park and Alderwood Park need to be completed as soon as possible. Also, a trail system needs to be developed for walking and bicycling that would link Northeast Tacoma to other systems in Tacoma, Federal Way, Fife, Browns Point and Dash Point. Finally, the community needs to take advantage of its scenic views and vistas by establishing and/or improving (e.g. landscaping, paving, litter containers, etc.) public access to slope sites such as Norpoint Park located on Norpoint Way.

**Policy NET-4.3 Unique Natural Features**

Require developers to provide and maintain landscaping of projects and to preserve any unique areas as open space.

**Policy NET-4.4 Recreational Opportunities**

Develop regulations to require large-scale residential developers (e.g. subdivisions) to provide recreational opportunities within those developments to help meet the recreational needs of the residents.

**Goal NET-5 Transportation**

Achieve a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system which provides for the present and future land use and population needs of Northeast Tacoma.

**Goal NET-6 Community Facilities**

Provide a broad range of community facilities and services that are distributed fairly and equitably to meet the needs of the residents of all ages and of all areas within Northeast Tacoma.

**Goal NET-7 Utilities and Services**

To develop, maintain and properly distribute an adequate system of utilities and provide for an acceptable level of police, fire, refuse collection and street cleaning services for area residents.

**Goal NET-8 Special Areas**

**Trees, Views and Native American Cultural Sites**

**Policy Intent** - As Northeast Tacoma has developed, there has been a significant loss of mature trees and new efforts need to be made to retain the remaining trees. The trees add visual beauty, aid in erosion prevention and re-oxygenation and provide wildlife habitats. Planting of new trees should occur in areas where retention is not feasible. As an asset of

the area, view also deserves consideration for promotion, protection and/or preservation pursuant to the City's view sensitive ordinance. As an area for early Puyallup and Nisqually cultural activities, it is also important that preservation and other actions be implemented in support of identified historic or prehistoric sites.

### **Policy NET-8.3 Site Views/Minimize View Blockage**

Development within potential view areas should utilize various building designs, site layouts, street arrangements and orientation to maximize and protect the view potentials and minimize view blockage of adjacent sites.

## **Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element**

### ○ **Section I – Background (GD-2)**

For some residents, continued growth means prosperity and a healthy city. For others, any amount of growth is undesirable. It is unrealistic to think that growth will not occur in our city. In the past several years, increasing numbers of people have been attracted to the Pacific Northwest area. With so many coming to our area, the problem the city faces is how much, when and where should growth take place.

The comprehensive plan for growth and development adopted by the City of Tacoma addresses managed, desirable growth and development and, as such, can be considered a major force for shaping and reshaping the city's urban form. The Plan is a means of managing growth in a way that is physically, socially and environmentally acceptable, while at the same time providing for the preservation, redevelopment and improvement of the City's established residential neighborhoods.

### ○ **Section II – Assumptions (GD-2)**

#### **Residential Development (GD-3)**

Housing will continue to be developed in the urban growth area outside the city's boundaries where adequate facilities and services are available. Residential density is likely to increase in mixed-use centers, along some major transportation routes, near transit centers, and within or near employment and shopping centers.

#### **Environment (GD-4)**

Air, noise and water pollution will continue to be of special concern to the region. Maintaining the quality of the air we breathe, the quiet of our residential neighborhoods, and the quality of the water we drink, live around and use for recreation is essential for assuring the health and welfare of the region. The region's economic development is dependent upon water-related commerce and trade. Maintaining pollution-free waters is vital to present and future economic interests. Ensuring that the region's water resources remain relatively pollution free is paramount to its survival and continual growth and development.

Measures to control suspended particulates (dust, smoke, fumes and other liquid or solid matter) will continue to be needed to maintain air quality in the region. Reduction of the level of transportation related emissions will continue to be important in addressing air pollution problems. Transportation plans and policies concerned with traffic congestion and related air and noise pollution will focus on a multi-modal transportation system and the curtailment of single-occupancy vehicle use.

- **Section IV – Development Intensities (GD-6)**

- Low Intensity Development (GD-7)**

Low activity patterns and traffic generation characterize low intensity development. Low intensity development is predominantly single-family residential development, but can include duplexes, triplexes, and small-scale multifamily development. Supportive neighborhood convenience commercial establishments and community facilities such as churches, schools, libraries and fire stations also are considered low intensity uses. Open space areas may also be considered a low intensity use and can include recreational areas and parks. To better differentiate the range of uses within low intensity areas, single-family detached housing areas are delineated separately.

- Community Facilities Policy Plan**

**Existing facilities and services** (p. 10) – Community facilities (public, quasi-public and private) provide a location where specific types of group activity or services can be provided. Community facilities are buildings and other capital improvements used for the delivery of public services. They provide places for public assembly, social and health services and for the administration of public affairs as well as facilities for transportation of utilities. Examples include schools, libraries, correctional institutions, police and fire stations, government office buildings, airports, solid waste transfer stations, transit terminals and maintenance facilities. Some community facilities are privately built and operated. These include churches, hospitals, nursing homes, community club buildings and private or parochial schools.

Community facilities vary widely in character and impact. Some are residential in character or associated with residential areas such as schools and libraries. The location of some facilities may be dependent on other considerations such as transportation or utility system needs. Because the term community facilities encompasses a large number of diverse facilities and uses, they have been grouped into general categories to aid discussion. The following pages provide an overview of existing community facilities in Tacoma.

**Schools** – Educational services in Tacoma are both publicly and privately operated. In Tacoma, public schools are operated by Tacoma School District No. 10. The district operates 57 separate facilities comprised of 5 high schools, 10 junior high schools and 42 elementary schools. Bates Vocational School is also operated by Tacoma Public Schools. State law sets the standards for service levels and facility development of public schools.

The District has been experiencing a declining enrollment in the past few years as a result of a lower birth rate and smaller families. This decline in enrollment may result in the use of surplus schools, where appropriate, for health clinics, community centers or other uses. Currently the School District with the aid of several citizen committees is conducting an in-depth study on its education facilities in the city, including facility standards, enrollment projections, location of new facilities and possible school closures. The recommendations of the citizen committees will be presented to the Tacoma School Board during the late fall of this year.

**Parks and Recreation** – Public recreation and open space facilities are a specialized type of community facility. They are owned and/or operated by the Metropolitan Park District, the Tacoma School District or the City of Tacoma. Existing facilities include parks, playgrounds, improved school sites, trails, bikeways, gulches, and steep slopes. Facilities offered by the

private sector such as movie theaters, bowling alleys or skating rinks are also considered as a part of the existing facilities available to meet a portion of recreation needs.

### **Northeast Tacoma Planning Area (pp. 26-27)**

#### **Existing Facilities**

- North Shore Golf Course, 4101 North Shore Blvd., Tacoma, Washington

#### **Goals and Policies -- Location and Design**

- **(2) Aesthetics and facilities** (p. 49) Encourage community facilities to be coordinated and integrated with surrounding land uses so as to aesthetically enhance the neighborhood in which they are located and to minimize any inherent nuisance, influence or disrupt on adjacent properties.