Our Mission

We partner with the community to build a livable, sustainable, and safe City by providing strategic, timely, predictable, cost-effective planning and development services with a culture focused on community engagement, customer service, creativity, accountability, and continuous improvement.
An Introduction to Our 2025 Plan

At the Community Level – Vision 2025: The Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee identified four Core Values to shape the process and Tacoma’s vision:

- Opportunity
- Equity
- Partnerships
- Accountability

Each of the community events used these core values to shape the discussion of Tacoma’s future and to ensure that the resulting plan is visionary, realistic, and focused on specific and measurable outcomes.

Diversity is Tacoma’s greatest asset and the foundation of its outstanding arts, culture, and community programs. Along with a spectacular natural setting, the diversity of Tacoma’s workforce and quality of its neighborhoods give Tacoma an enviable foundation for community and economic development. At the same time, the community has much to accomplish in terms of public health and safety, human and social needs, and education and learning. To address these challenges and opportunities, Tacoma 2025 is organized into 6 Focus Areas:

- Education
- Equity and Accessibility
- Livability
- Economy and Workforce
- Government Performance
- Civic Engagement
From the Council – The City Council sets the strategic direction for the City Manager that guides policy and priorities of the City in accordance with citizen’s direction. These include:

2018 Council Priorities

- Public Safety
- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Homelessness
- Digital Equity
- Walkability
- Transit Access
- Health Equity
- Regional Cooperation
- Civic Engagement

Within the Municipality – Our City’s Vision, Mission and Principles of Operation: Reporting to the City Manager we are guided by the City’s Mission and principles as follow:

City of Tacoma Mission

The City of Tacoma provides high-quality, innovative and cost-effective municipal services that enhance the lives of its citizens and the quality of Tacoma’s neighborhoods and business districts.
City of Tacoma Vision
Tacoma is a livable and progressive international city, regarded for the richness of its diverse population and its natural setting.

*The Principles That Guide Us*

- **Integrity**
  We conduct our personal, workgroup, and organizational actions in an ethical and honest manner, and we serve as responsible stewards of the public resources entrusted to us.

- **Service**
  We treat everyone with courtesy and empathy. We provide customer-focused municipal services that produce high value and results.

- **Excellence**
  We achieve the highest performance possible. We use collaborative and inclusive approaches to organizational and community issues. We are accountable for individually and collectively meeting high standards.

- **Equity**
  We understand and reflect the community we serve. We ensure every community member has services and opportunities that will enable people to satisfy their essential needs and advance their well being.

Alignment with Planning and Development Services — PDS vision, mission, values, and goals were developed in 2015 in the 2015-2016 Organizational Development Plan. The plan developed initiatives which would move the department toward achieving those goals. As part of the update to the plan, the vision, mission, values, and goals have been reviewed and reaffirmed. Implementation of initiatives started in 2016 and carried through 2018. This effort is to update that plan into a Strategic Plan to move the Department forward to 2025 in alignment with the City of Tacoma Vision 2025. The update engages stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement, transparency of communications and decision making, and the ability of the Department to be agile and responsive to the changing needs of its employees and citizens of Tacoma.
PDS Vision
Planning and Development Services provides peerless planning and permitting services, guiding Tacoma’s path to be a sustainable world-class city through:

- Customer Success and Satisfaction
- Financial Sustainability
- Highly Competent Employees
- Community Engagement and Enhanced Livability
- Valuable Partnerships in Economic Development
- Continuous Improving all Services

PDS Mission
We partner with the community to build a livable, sustainable, and safe City by providing strategic, timely, predictable, cost-effective planning and development services with a culture focused on community engagement, customer service, creativity, accountability, and continuous improvement.

PDS Values
- We are a collaborative team of professionals, focused on building a safe, livable, and sustainable city.
- We are dedicated to continuous improvement.
- We provide pathways to advancement.
- We are dedicated to providing equitable services.
2025 PDS Goals

Goal 1: Equitable, Efficient Customer Service – “Fast and Friendly, or Free”*

To promote Livability in the City of Tacoma, the Planning and Development Services Department will issue 85% of residential and commercial permits on time by creating efficient and effective review processes and programs. Service Levels include:

• Application to issuance – commercial (85% in 8 weeks or less) and residential (85% in 2 weeks or less)
• Application to the first review on commercial (85% in 4 weeks or less)
• Average review cycles, no more than 2 per permit

Goal 2: Conservation and Protection of Environmental and Cultural Assets

To promote the livability and vitality of Tacoma’s neighborhoods, the Planning and Development Services Department will, in collaboration with other City departments, expand efforts to protect and preserve Tacoma’s place-defining characteristics, including historic and cultural resources, scenic views, and natural setting.

Goal 3: Financial Stability

To promote the Economy/Workforce in the City of Tacoma, the Planning and Development Service Department will create and maintain a financially sustainable permitting system.

*See TacomaPermits.org for details
Goal 4: Compact, Complete, and Connected Development

To promote Livability in the City of Tacoma, the Planning and Development Services Department in collaboration with other city departments will develop strategies to realize and support growth centers and 20-minute neighborhoods.

Goal 5: Civic Engagement

To promote Government Performance and Civic Engagement in the City of Tacoma, the Planning and Development Services Department will develop and implement performance and engagement practices that demonstrate a standard of excellence, evidenced by transparency and efficiency in all regulatory code and policy development, permitting, inspection and planning services.

Goal 6: Employee Development and Support

To promote Livability in the City of Tacoma, The Planning and Development Services Department will create and support opportunities for employee growth and enhanced quality of work life through training, accountability, engagement, and competency.
PDS Focus Areas

These areas of focus came from the employee and internal stakeholder interviews. They provide the theme or focus areas for the initiatives to support the Tacoma 2025 vision and the PDS vision and mission. These focus areas will guide the development of initiatives and outline work tasks and outcomes. PDS Initiatives guide our work over the next 3 biennia.

**Employee Investment**
Develop and implement initiatives that foster employee growth, alignment, excellence, creativity, accountability and an enhanced quality of work life.

**Customer Satisfaction and Success**
Capture and understand what makes our customers successful and continually provide our best value to them at all points of our processes. Respond promptly, professionally and completely. Our processes and decisions with citizens, our community, and customers will be transparent and aligned with our values and principles of customer service.

**Financially Sustainable**
We will ensure that our business processes are efficient and transparent and that we are accountable to operate in a cost-effective, financially mature, and responsible manner. We cover our costs with appropriate fees and fund general services at a level consistent with community interest and needs.

**Community Involvement**
We structurally and formally engage our stakeholders, customers and community members to gain understanding, receive feedback, and develop trust and support to address community needs and make improvements over time. We place emphasis on equity, transparency, and accountability to our stated values.

**Quality Community**
We ensure that our planning efforts, decisions, permits, inspection actions and approved projects all result in contributing to a safe, livable, vibrant and cohesive community. We demonstrate accountability to our decisions, alignment to our values and principles of operation, equity and transparency in communication and outreach, and service levels that meet the needs of the community.
PDS Initiatives

**Integrated Permitting Service Delivery Initiative**

This initiative is a structured approach to define, test (pilot), implement and refine an integrated service delivery model where cross-functional expertise is aligned to project types as a means to improve service levels and quality of review (QA/QC on comments, Pre-application services, and equitable service levels). The Residential Permit studio is an outcome of this initiative which started in 2015. Included in this initiative is continuous improvement to the studio concept and integrating that concept into other permit types.

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, customer outreach and validation, financial analysis, staff relocation for adjacencies, and process changes/monitoring.

This initiative, done properly, supports all five Focus Areas. This initiative will continue through 2024.

**Employee Engagement, Training and Retention**

This initiative develops a PDS focused employee training and onboarding program including specific elements such as orientation to all divisions in the department, funding issues, customer service training, mentoring service expectations, and a training strategy by job classification. Other tasks that may be part of this initiative will include refining job classifications and labor relations work. Staffing analysis and succession planning, which could be in the financial sustainability plan.

This is an ongoing initiative which produced results over the past couple of years. Those accomplishments will support continuing investments through 2024.

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, stakeholder outreach and partnerships, financial analysis, and process changes/monitoring. This initiative, done properly, supports all five Focus Areas.
Urban Design Studio Initiative

This 2018-2019 initiative establishes an Urban Design Studio, through a substantial public process, with the requisite code amendments, design manuals, administrative and public process, fees, etc. This studio enhances the City’s capacity to ensure higher quality urban design in new public and private development and is critical for encouraging long-term growth, community vitality, and trust in City government.

Financial Stewardship, Sustainability, and Management

This initiative is a series of efforts that continuously develop a more financially mature and future-focused PDS. PDS includes multiple budget accounts, including general fund accounts and enterprise fund accounts. Tracking and ensuring alignment of projections and expenses is critical to ensuring the validity of the PDS budget and maintaining services. Maintaining positive fund balances, alignment between projections and actual expenses, and making proactive adjustments as necessary to prevent last-minute surprises and budget requests or adjustments.

This effort increases the understanding of how PDS is funded and adds tools for management to understand how their budget is impacted by development activity and how efficient permitting practices are crucial to keeping services affordable for the community.

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, stakeholder and customer outreach and partnerships, financial analysis, and process changes/monitoring. This initiative, done properly, supports all five Focus Areas.

Aligning Location and Technology with Service Delivery Model.

This initiative studies and develops recommendations that can be implemented in stages over the next six years to support the integrated service model (see previous initiative) and continuously improve employee and customer experiences. This initiative could result in a remodel and/or a relocation of staff. How the work gets done and what adjacencies between employees and between employees and customers should be considered, as well as best service locations and technology options for customers (e.g., parking, access, conference facilities, video access, etc.).

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, stakeholder and customer outreach and partnerships, financial analysis, and process changes/monitoring. This initiative, done properly, covers all five Focus Areas.
Communication Initiative

This initiative is a series of efforts that continuously develop improved communications with citizens and customers of PDS. The work of PDS impacts virtually all Tacoma citizens. To provide quality customer service, it is important that the citizens be educated, informed and understand the impacts of the decisions made.

To achieve transparency and accountability, investment in this initiative is critical to ensure the success and satisfaction of our customers and the community as a whole. Positive communications across department lines as well as internal staff will be improved with this initiative.

This is an ongoing initiative that has some accomplishments over the past year. Some of these include three improvements requested by the Master Builders Association that will need council approval to change the code: Right-of-way Occupancy Permits, bonding requirements, and implementation of the in-lieu program for off-site development. Permit fee adjustments or general fund contributions are necessary to support ROCC permitting. These items will be evaluated and completed under this initiative.

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, stakeholder and customer outreach and partnerships, financial analysis, and process changes/monitoring. This initiative, done properly, supports all five Focus Areas.
Governance of Change Management and Process Improvement Initiative

This initiative is intended to create centralized, purposeful change management and process improvement to all areas of PDS. The general work of PDS can be described as code development and modification (long-range planning), code administration (plan review and permit issuance), and code enforcement or compliance (mitigations, bonding, inspections, etc.) In all of this work, there is constant and continual governance required so that codes and rules are updated, applied uniformly and consistently, and that ongoing education, process improvement, and change management occur to support staff, customers, and stakeholders.

Continuing work on the Unified Development Code (UDE) will eventually relocate all development chapters for the site, building and land use into one location, making access and understanding of requirements easier. The Review panel will provide documentation and feedback to support code improvements. Other project work in this initiative will include coaching and code interpretation support, training for staff, and a Continuous improvement advocate program, among others.
Appendix – Detailed Draft Work Plan

Integrated Permitting Service Delivery Initiative

This initiative is a structured approach to define, test (pilot), implement and refine an integrated service delivery model where cross-functional expertise is aligned to project types as a means to improve service levels and quality of review (QA/QC on comments, Pre-application services, and equitable service levels). The Residential Permit studio is an outcome of this initiative which started in 2015. Included in this initiative is continuous improvement to the studio concept and integrating that concept into other permit types.

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, customer outreach and validation, financial analysis, staff relocation for adjacencies, and process changes/monitoring.

This initiative, done properly, supports all five Focus Areas. This initiative will continue through 2024.

What will be detailed in the Work Plan for the 2019-2020 Biennium:

- Select potential projects for studio pilots; e.g., restaurants and/or tenant improvements. Some direction will come from Permit Focus Group to prioritize.
- Set up pilot projects and staff, schedule, monitor, etc.
  - Development of an after-action review process to evaluate outcomes ensuring they meet stated goals, increase the value to the customer, and ensure continuous improvement.
  - Create a process to engage staff in the design stage to ensure their knowledge and experience are utilized to develop the solutions to make this work and meet the goal.
  - Have an example of approach with data and need to reference this to employees and how the approach works – model it by different permit types.
  - Teamwork, redundant staffing, the satisfaction of work opportunities for the employees should be outlined.
  - Details of the implementation will be a bottom-up approach with heavy external customer input.
• Coordinate efforts between NCS & PDS so that general government work is less co-mingled with enterprise work. Establish operating protocols that will benefit both departments and become most responsive to the community.
  o Ensure a big picture solution by incorporating cross-departmental stakeholder engagement, i.e. inspections and code enforcement.
• Improve on the model for the next step – need to point this out and expand for the plan.

_Urban Design Studio Initiative_

This 2018-2019 initiative establishes an Urban Design Studio, through a substantial public process, with the requisite code amendments, design manuals, administrative and public process, fees, etc. This studio enhances the City’s capacity to ensure higher quality urban design in new public and private development and is critical for encouraging long-term growth, community vitality, and trust in City government.

What will be detailed in the Work Plan for the 2019-2020 Biennium:

Creation of an Urban Design Studio, including dedicated staff and a design review program that includes both regulatory components and community and staff engagement, education, and outreach components to be done over the next biennium, including:

• Hire staff,
• hire consultant,
• create program outline,
• create design guidelines,
• amend code, and
• coordinating with UWT Urban Studies Program and their new urban design undergraduate program.

Implementation needs to include training developers and plan review staff
Employee Engagement, Training and Retention

This initiative develops a PDS focused employee training and onboarding program including specific elements such as orientation to all divisions in the department, funding issues, customer service training, mentoring service expectations, and a training strategy by job classification. Other tasks that may be part of this initiative will include refining job classifications and labor relations work. Staffing analysis and succession planning, which could be in the financial sustainability plan.

This is an ongoing initiative which produced results over the past couple of years. Some of those accomplishments are listed below.

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, stakeholder outreach and partnerships, financial analysis, and process changes/monitoring.

This initiative, done properly, supports all five Focus Areas. This initiative will start in 2018 and will continue through 2024.

What will be detailed in the Work Plan for the 2019-2020 Biennium:

- Baseline employee survey
  - Evaluate alternative work schedules and improvements to work/life balance
- Review of department training budget
  - Evaluate options to accommodate out of state travel;
- Need consultant contract to facilitate strategy document
- New Employee Onboarding guide and orientation
- Refresher training for all employees for communication and customer service. (telephone skills and greeting skills)
- Cross training/job-shadowing
Accomplishments

- Creation of a PDS Strategy document, which can be used to decide training opportunities with the goal of equity in training opportunities; increased training budget.

- PDS Policy - Funding for Employee’s Professional License and Certification Fees- Anticipated adoption January 2017.

- Note: The new ICC requirements go into effect with the adoption of Development Specialist and Plans Examiner Classifications (January 1, 2017).

- Pay for mandatory certifications and training in 2017; pay for ICC Certifications required for new Plans Examiner and Development Services Classifications; Pay for Principal Engineer test (if pass); Fund 1 AICP exam and membership (start with 1 and fund 1 additional each year) with goal of all Principal Planners having AICP-start in 2018; target 2 Milgard manager training/year and one out of state leadership training/year - start in 2017

Financial Stewardship, Sustainability, and Management

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What will be detailed in the Work Plan for the 2019-2020 Biennium:

- Financial education for staff so they can understand budget and understanding what financial sustainability and responsibility are.
  - Determine training plan and content for all levels of employees to include:
- Evaluation of fee structures -- What goes into fees. Use this to evaluate how to best provide the services – better decision making based on financial sustainability.
- Create a communication tool for unfunded mandates – try to be more transparent with what is fee-based or general fund based.

Ongoing project efforts may also include:

- Ensuring cost recovery through fees and appropriate general fund allocations for all permit and indirect work (Appropriate fees or funding for all services);
- Automating fees in Accela for accurate billing and timely intake; Internal audits of cash handling;
- Improvements to, and creating state-of-the-art credit card processing and payment systems;
- Alignment of Accela and SAP financial systems;
- Fee code for pre-application appointments and services;
- Alignment/integrating of site development and PDS organizations.
- Finalize internal PDS budget structure (individual division/functional “buckets” and allocated budget per bucket), finalize a consistent reporting tool for use by each division, and ensure ongoing tracking of budget expenses versus expected expenditures throughout the biennium, and make modifications as necessary.
- Better tools for time tracking
- Regular review of documents and policies
- Regular review of expense vs budget, and cashflow
- Creation of an inter and intra-cost center budget reallocation process
- Review and update of cash-handling procedures
Aligning Location and Technology with Service Delivery Model.

This initiative studies and develops recommendations that can be implemented in stages over the next six years to support the integrated service model (see previous initiative) and continuously improve employee and customer experiences. This initiative could result in a remodel and/or a relocation of staff. How the work gets done and what adjacencies between employees and between employees and customers should be considered as well as best service locations and technology options for customers (e.g., parking, access, conference facilities, video access, etc.).

This initiative is expected to require appropriate sponsorship, project management, staffing, technology support and changes, stakeholder and customer outreach and partnerships, financial analysis, and process changes/monitoring.

This initiative, done properly, all five Focus Areas.

What will be detailed in the Work Plan for the 2019-2020 Biennium:

- Hire Consultant to perform space needs analysis to include:
  - Adjacency of staff
    - Interview staff – ensure method involves as many staff as possible and include staff in design review
    - Interview or survey customers to determine best ways and times for appointments and interactions
  - Technology options as appropriate
  - Have a high customer interface – where do we want to be.
  - Include storage, library, customer areas and staff community space
  - Security

Communication Initiative

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**What will be detailed in the Work Plan:**

- Create a communication plan with strategies and implementation timeline.
  Consideration of the following elements will be included:
  - Equity in communication, e.g., multiple languages for TIP sheets and outreach materials,
  - Community Outreach and Engagement support,
  - Code change communication:
    - Community and staff engagement and training
  - Customer surveys,
  - PDS Forums
  - Social Media Platform
  - Web Design Update – a searchable website
  - Planning page with pictures
  - Train awareness of two-way communications – staff to customers; customers to staff and staff to management; management to staff– in a form that works best for individuals i.e. USPS, emails, voice, etc.
  - Need to be equitable for those who don’t use technology
Governance of Change Management and Process Improvement Initiative

This initiative is intended to create centralized, purposeful change management and process improvement to all areas of PDS.

What will be detailed in the Work Plan for the 2019-2020 Biennium:

▪ UDC work – Create a new chapter in the TMC called Title 19 (the UDC) which will relocate all development chapters for the site, building and land use into one location, making access and understanding of requirements easier.

▪ Review panel documentation and feedback to code improvements

▪ Customer meetings/coaching and code interpretation

▪ Code management process and the training of that process externally and internally. Set up the protocols to lead in and then make changes to processes. – communicated, trained

▪ Other changes needed to include documenting code and process changes.

▪ Directors rules, documenting processes, ensure testing, look for conflict and overlap in work plans

▪ SOPs

▪ Improved or set protocols for meetings to include agendas and minutes

▪ Continuous improvement advocate program