

Culture and History Element

Introduction

This chapter of the Tacoma Comprehensive Plan outlines goals and polices pertaining to historic preservation, the arts, and cultural tourism in celebration of the City's international and diverse population. Each section within this element brings into focus the value Tacoma places upon its cultural heritage, sense of place and quality of life. The policies strive to provide practical application balanced with a vision for the next 20 years. It is a guideline for Tacoma's future – Tacoma to be a place that champions its diverse character, embraces and supports the arts and art in public places. It is a city that cherishes its heritage while recognizing the importance of growth and the natural evolution of cities, and promotes its cultural and historic assets to visitors throughout the world.

The principal areas of this chapter are:

- CH-HP-9 Use historic development patterns as guidance for future planning
- CH-HP-10 Encourage historically compatible contemporary urban infill
- CH-HP-11 Leverage Tacoma's historic character as an economic development tool
- CH-HP-12 Encourage the formation of partnerships for historic rehabilitation projects
- CH-HP-13 Preserve historically and culturally significant properties through public ownership
- CH-HP-14 Protect archaeological resources
- CH-HP-15 Broaden public awareness and education of Tacoma's diverse history

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- CH-HP-4 Discourage the demolition of historically significant properties
- CH-HP-5 Encourage neighborhood-level preservation
- CH-HP-6 Promote adaptive reuse of historic properties
- CH-HP-7 Encourage the preservation of historically significant publicly owned properties
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- CH-IP-2 Promote international partnerships
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- CH-IP-5 Celebrate Tacoma's diverse community
- CH-IP-6 Foster a sense of community
- CH-IP-7 Build upon community pride
- CH-IP-8 Celebrate and preserve cultural traditions
- CH-IP-9 Foster global community partnerships
- CH-IP-10 Participate in cultural exchanges

Historic Preservation

Introduction

Tacoma has been home for many different groups of people throughout time. From the earliest Native American inhabitants, to the first Euramerican settlers, to the subsequent waves of immigrants from both the United States and abroad, many peoples have contributed to Tacoma's cultural landscapes. Major historic period themes in Tacoma include shipping, timber, mining, real estate, banking, and railroads. The City believes it is important to recognize the myriad contributions of these people in its historic preservation planning.

Types of Resources

Over the course of its history, Tacoma's appearance and form have changed as a result of the activities of its residents. The Tacoma area has numerous archaeological resources of cultural, ethnohistorical and scientific importance.

In addition, Tacoma has a rich architectural legacy in the form of buildings dating from the 1870s through the 1960s, which demonstrate the activities, hopes, and aspirations of its people as well as represent significant contributions to design thought. In modern times, this continues with the innovative adaptive reuse of historic buildings as well as the construction of contemporary architectural icons that reflect Tacoma's nature as a dynamic living city. As a result, Tacoma has a unique mix of "old" and "new" buildings.

Neighborhoods

Tacoma is a city of neighborhoods, from the first platted community in Old Town to the speculative platting of its surrounding residential neighborhoods, connected by streetcar lines, in the 1890s. Although the urban core of the City is its commercial center, the City recognizes that surrounding neighborhoods and their development patterns are equally significant to the history and form of Tacoma. Moreover, each neighborhood has its own history and identity that should be fostered and supported by the City's policies and projects.

Community Initiative

The residents of Tacoma value their city and its natural and architectural beauty. Many of the great historic preservation successes of the past

are due to community based support, personal initiative, and individual action.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission, comprised of appointed citizen volunteers, has provided a leadership role in many of Tacoma's most recognizable adaptive reuse projects. This spirit of activism reflects the care and pride Tacoma residents take in their home.

Goal

The City of Tacoma will be a national leader in adaptive reuse and historic preservation programs through the identification, enhancement, preservation and sharing of its rich cultural heritage; and will serve as a shining example of a dynamic historic urban center in the 21st century.

Policy Intent

The histories of the Tacoma area and its many residents, both past and present, serves as the foundation of the City's identity as it grows into the 21st century. Innovative Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management policies and procedures build upon this identity by protecting historic resources, contributing to the long range planning process, providing economic development opportunities, encouraging tourism, encouraging citizen involvement in the city's history, and, overall, fostering civic pride.

Policies

CH-HP-1 Protect Historic Properties

Protect, preserve, and enhance historic, cultural, and scenic resources throughout the City.

CH-HP-2 Maintain an active City historic preservation program

Provide continued leadership in local historic preservation by maintaining a state certified historic preservation program

CH-HP-3 Potential historic districts and landmarks

Encourage and support the identification and designation of historic districts, sites, and landmarks where significant cultural, architectural, and historical characteristics prevail.

CH-HP-4 Discourage the demolition of historically and culturally significant properties

Discourage the demolition of historic properties in Tacoma registered on, or eligible to be registered on, the local, state or national historic registers.

CH-HP-5 Encourage neighborhood-level preservation

Enhance the architectural, historical, cultural, and landscape features important to neighborhood identity and spirit by encouraging the adoption of development standards, zoning, and financial incentives targeted towards neighborhoods.

CH-HP-6 Promote adaptive reuse of historic properties

Utilize economic incentives, such as tax incentives, loans, and grant programs; and regulations such as development standards, building codes and zoning; that encourage the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historically, architecturally and culturally significant properties, areas and neighborhoods.

CH-HP-7 Encourage the preservation of historically significant publicly owned properties

Encourage the preservation, continued use or adaptive reuse, and proper maintenance of historically significant publicly-owned facilities, properties and amenities, including schools, parks and other publicly-owned historic properties.

CH-HP-8 Utilize development strategies that are compatible with historic preservation

Identify development and planning strategies that are compatible with and capitalize upon the presence of historic buildings and places.

CH-HP-9 Use historic development patterns as guidance for future planning

Recognize historic patterns of land use, infrastructure development and circulation patterns and utilize those patterns where appropriate for future planning and development.

CH-HP-10 Encourage historically compatible contemporary urban infill

Encourage appropriate design for contemporary infill development in historic and established areas of the city by the use of development standards regarding scale, proportion, rhythm, compatible materials, and streetscape.

CH-HP-11 Leverage Tacoma's historic character as an economic development tool

Pursue and utilize opportunities to foster economic development through historic preservation, including through heritage tourism, cultural events, marketing, and adaptive reuse.

CH-HP-12 Encourage the formation of partnerships for historic rehabilitation projects

Identify opportunities for potential public/private and community partnerships to encourage historic preservation.

CH-HP-13 Preserve historically and culturally significant properties through public ownership

Encourage public ownership of areas of natural scenic beauty or historic or ecological interest and protect and preserve for education, recreation, and other public purposes.

CH-HP-14 Protect archaeological resources

Identify, preserve, and protect archaeological resources in the City, and properly document archaeological sites where impacts from development cannot be avoided.

CH-HP-15 Broaden public awareness and education of Tacoma's diverse history

Encourage and promote a diverse set of historical perspectives, and acknowledge and embrace Tacoma's rich cultural history.

The Arts

Introduction

Arts and culture are essential for the continuing growth and development of Tacoma's citizens, economy and quality of life. Tacoma must be more than a marketplace. It should be an authentic and dynamic place where both citizens and visitors can be engaged and elevated. Tacoma should be a place where things aren't just done efficiently and professionally, but gracefully.

Neighborhoods should continue to be a primary focal point of Tacoma's cultural renaissance. Tacoma's neighborhoods and business districts must continue to enhance their vibrant and distinctive sense of place. Tacoma's rich ethnic and cultural diversity should be nurtured, celebrated and shared in community centers and cultural experiences.

Downtown should be the 24-hour-heart of Tacoma-- a true civic center for people of all ages, ethnicities and interests. Downtown should offer a wide variety of cultural choices, including world-class cultural organizations, gathering spaces, public art, and ample opportunities for social interaction and self-expression. Tacoma's own performing arts venues should continue to be the home of local performing arts organizations. These organizations should be celebrated and sustained as they enrich the lives of Tacoma's residents and visitors.

The Tacoma Arts Commission and its staff play a vital role in Tacoma's cultural scene. They foster arts and cultural programs for the enrichment of the City and its citizens; foster the development of a local arts community; encourage an environment for the success of working individual artists; coordinate and strengthen new and existing arts organizations; develop cooperation with regional entities; encourage programs for cultural exchange and development; and further the vision of Tacoma as an international, progressive City.

Goal

To embrace and enhance the arts as a vital tool in building Tacoma's community and economy for the benefit of all of its citizens.

Section 1: Public Art

Policy Intent

Public Art is the manifestation of a community's self-identity and a reflection of the value citizens place on their environment. A diverse collection of art in a city tells our stories, provides interest in neighborhoods, creates identity, establishes community presence, and reflects the many talents of artists. Public art should be incorporated into the fabric of our infrastructure, its presence clear in public spaces and neighborhoods. It can transform eyesores into amenities, enliven design, provide wayfinding, become a landmark, create spaces and places where people want to visit and stay. Public art creates community dialogues and we should celebrate its role in providing that discourse.

Public Art is a city's legacy that needs to be nurtured and cared for. Proper stewardship for the collection reflects that caring and commitment to quality.

Policies

CH-PA-1 Expand public art

Seek innovative and strategic approaches to expand public art.

CH-PA-2 Foster cooperative approaches for public art

Foster cooperative approaches to developing public art that allow artists and communities to create the best work.

CH-PA-3 Encourage diversity in public art

Encourage diversity of high quality public art throughout the city that includes a variety of materials, styles, approaches, and artists.

CH-PA-4 Encourage stewardship of public art

Encourage stewardship for public art assuring proper maintenance, oversight, documentation, recording, and sensitivity to developing the collection.

CH-PA-5 Encourage thoughtful selection process for public art

Encourage inclusive, thoughtful, and thorough selection process for public art.

CH-PA-6 Foster professional practice

Encourage the use of professional practices in working with artists and foster professional development services for artists.

CH-PA-7 Encourage public art in private development

Provide incentives in the zoning code to include works of art in private development including density bonuses. Provide technical assistance services and guidance to developers in the selection and installation of the work.

CH-PA-8 Create temporary art

Foster the creation and implementation of temporary and ephemeral public art experiences.

CH-PA-9 Utilize public art as a visitor attraction

Utilize public art in Tacoma as a tourist attraction and develop marketing strategies to raise the visibility of the artwork. Give people the tools to learn about and engage with the art.

Section 2: Cultural Services

Policy Intent

Cultural organizations enrich the lives of Tacomans with opportunities to enjoy and participate in artistic experiences and/or community expression. Many citizens have their first artistic experiences at one of Tacoma's cultural organizations. The arts are a vibrant ecology, from the old growth of our largest institutions, such as the museums, orchestras, and theaters, to the new life of up-and-coming, grassroots organizations.

The large organizations help the City achieve its economic development goals and provide stable jobs for many working professionals from carpenters to curators to café staff. The smaller groups add breadth and depth to Tacoma's cultural scene; in many cases, small organizations present the widest variety of work and reach the widest variety of audiences. The City values all cultural organizations, whether they are run by paid staff or volunteers, and regardless of size or discipline.

They contribute to Tacoma's quality of place, represent jobs that add to the tax base, help perpetuate endangered art forms, offer

groundbreaking educational programming and help define Tacoma to the world as a progressive, international City.

Policies

CH-CS-1 Foster public access to the arts

Through the Tacoma Arts Commission, foster public access to the arts by encouraging strategic investments in arts organizations and utilizing cultural services resources.

CH-CS-2 Support arts organizations through technical assistance

Support high-quality management for organizations of all sizes through meaningful technical assistance programs.

CH-CS-3 Strengthen stability and sustainability for arts organizations

Strengthen stability and sustainability for all organizations both downtown and in the neighborhoods.

CH-CS-4 Encourage diverse arts experiences

Encourage organizations to grow artistically and offer citizens diverse cultural experiences.

CH-CS-5 Assure access to adequate facilities

Assure that cultural organizations have access to adequate and affordable facilities for the public presentation of work.

Section 3: Community-Building Events

Policy Intent

Tacoma enjoys an annual calendar full of special events, ranging from celebrations with a regional draw to neighborhood-specific festivals. Strong and distinct special events help build Tacoma as a community by expanding public participation, celebrating our diverse people and traditions, bringing us together to share our common stories, and promoting civic pride. Successful events can also have a large economic impact on the City's economy and represent a strong return on investment for public dollars.

Not all events are meant to be annual—some occur only once, around an important event or anniversary; others take on a life of their own and are adopted by nonprofit organizations; and still others lose their relevance and community support and may be discontinued. Tacoma should keep an open mind and seize the chance for “signature” events with national draw as the opportunities arise.

Policies

CH-CBE-1 Policies and Investments

Make strategic investments to ensure the continued success and future growth of Tacoma’s festivals and cultural events.

CH-CBE-2 Signature Events

Foster new ideas for one or more signature events that will have a broad community appeal and positive economic impact.

CH-CBE-3 Community Building

Encourage events which honor diversity and which embrace the entire community, as well as those which attract visitors to Tacoma.

CH-CBE-4 Public Venues

Encourage the design of new public buildings and spaces to accommodate the unique needs of indoor and outdoor special events.

Section 4: Creative Economy

Policy Intent

A creative, committed workforce, and in particular, a thriving community of artists, is vital to a rich civic life. Artists and other creative workers make meaningful contributions to Tacoma in economic, physical, and social terms. Investing in the creative sector is smart economics. It is also essential in promoting Tacoma as a progressive, international city. Tacoma’s policies and systems should enable talent to flourish for the benefit of the entire community.

Policies

CH-CE-1 Workforce Development

Support and encourage training in the arts, arts management and the business of the arts.

CH-CE-2 Recruitment

Actively and steadfastly attract artists and other creative workers to Tacoma.

CH-CE-3 Business-Friendly Environment

Promote a climate that encourages the establishment and operation of creative businesses in Tacoma through innovative regulations, use of incentives and other strategies.

CH-CE-4 Resources

Provide incentives for the development of resources such as artist live/work spaces, cultural incubators, resource centers and other innovative centers of creativity.

CH-CE-5 Public Benefit

Ensure public access to the work of Tacoma’s artists and other creative workers for the benefit of the entire community.

CH-CE-6 Cultural Districts

Identify opportunities for potential zones and cultural districts to develop creative clusters.

Section 5: Arts in Education

Policy Intent

Strengthening Tacoma’s programs of arts and cultural education must become a community-wide priority and available not only to our children but to all age groups. For our health as a City, cultural education must extend outside the school door. Through arts and cultural education, we learn about ourselves and our heritage; we unleash our imaginations and build our creative energies. Introduced to cultural differences, all people have the opportunity to grow and to understand diversity for what it is—difference among equals. Working artists should be present in schools to serve as role models and to give students enriched artistic experiences.

Children learn to think creatively, solve complex problems, collaborate with others, and express themselves. Arts education will help create the next generation of artists and audiences; more importantly, arts in education will create generations of well-rounded people who are capable of moving through a complex and changing world.

Policies

CH-AIE-1 Cultural Education

Encourage opportunities for education about both the common weave and separate threads of cultural traditions, building understanding in our increasingly diverse society.

CH-AIE-2 School-Based Arts

Encourage investment in local public and private schools to expand arts and cultural experiences.

CH-AIE-3 Arts in Community Settings

Foster creative leadership to strengthen partnerships that integrate educational opportunities for all ages in communities, such as artist-in-residence programs.

CH-AIE-4 Teacher Resources

Foster links between teachers and artists, arts organizations and cultural groups to encourage creativity in the classroom.

CH-AIE-5 Community Partners

Facilitate the connections between artists, arts organizations, cultural/heritage groups, and the local education community.

Cultural Tourism

Policy Intent

Tacoma has long been the hub of cultural activities for people living in the South Puget Sound region. In the new millennium, Tacoma has also become a destination city, well regarded for the beauty of its natural environment, historic architecture and rich cultural life. Cultural and historic events and attractions are important assets in the City's tourism industry, and are marketable products to both leisure travelers and conventioners.

Encouraging cultural tourism helps the City stimulate its economy by redefining its image to the world, providing a return on investment in cultural attractions, promoting Tacoma's historic character as an asset, and generating new tax revenues to support City services.

Goal

To leverage a strong return on the City's investments in the arts and

tourism industries, bolster earned income for local attractions, expand cultural experiences for residents, and generate new tax revenues for the City by attracting cultural tourists to Tacoma.

Policies

CH-CT-1 Market Tacoma for Tourism

Market Tacoma's distinctive character, historic inventory, public art, cultural and recreational activities, retail businesses, business districts, and attractions for tourism.

CH-CT-2 Connect Arts and Tourism

Foster the mutually-beneficial relationship between the arts and tourism sectors of the economy.

CH-CT-3 Promote Partnerships

Partner with community organizations, other public agencies and other stakeholders to promote a coherent, consistent message.

CH-CT-4 Historic Assets

Advance Tacoma's historic districts, landmarks and neighborhoods as destinations for visitors and tourists.

CH-CT-5 International City

Promote Tacoma as an international City, highlighting diverse cultural attractions, traditions and communities in the neighborhoods and business districts as well as downtown.

CH-CT-6 Messages with Impact

Design and implement innovative and high-impact campaigns, including the arts, heritage and international communities, that encourage visitation by both residents and tourists.

International Programs

Introduction

Tacoma is recognized as a livable, progressive, international city that is regarded for the richness of its multi-cultural population. It is a city of diverse people that offer opportunities for people to learn about themselves and the customs and traditions of others in the community and the world.

Tacoma is a place for people to meet and share experiences. By exploring the culture and customs of others, people learn that our differences become less and people begin to recognize their commonalities. A greater understanding of one another makes it possible for people with different backgrounds to live together with dignity and respect.

The Sister Cities Program is an important tool in promoting international relationships. The Sister Cities program is a citizen diplomacy network created to strengthen partnerships between the United States and international communities in an effort to increase global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic development. International exchanges are an opportunity for people-to-people relationships and bring about cultural understanding. These exchanges can occur between business, governments, health, arts, cultural and educational groups and organizations.

Globalization is a part of our contemporary society and is the key to peace throughout the world. Tacoma's role in globalization is recognized through its economic and trade development relationships around the world.

Goal

To encourage international relationships that focus on education, culture, tourism, economic development and trade.

Policy Intent

The policies below are intended to further Tacoma's role as an international city through a variety of international partnerships, such as the Sister Cities Program, and by promoting cultural understanding within the community. Implementation of these policies can be accomplished through partnerships that support artistic and cultural exchanges; promote international tourism; increase understanding of international issues; and support international trade and economic cooperation. Participants from throughout the world enrich Tacoma's quality of life and opportunities for the future.

Policies

CH-IP-1 Encourage international investment

Encourage international investments and resources in Tacoma

CH-IP-2 Promote international partnerships

Coordinate with public and private sector to promote international partnerships.

CH-IP-3 Maintain Sister Cities Program

Promote and administer a sister cities program that encourage international partnerships and exchanges that are focused on education, culture and trade.

CH-IP-4 Recognize Tacoma as an international port city.

Take advantage of the trade relationships established by the Port of Tacoma promoting other cultural and trade exchanges.

CH-IP-5 Celebrate Tacoma's diverse community

Celebrate the diversity of Tacoma's international community by working to raise awareness and understanding of the city and its people; and nurture the ethnic and cultural traditions of its diverse citizenry.

CH-IP-6 Foster a sense of community

Foster Tacoma as a city where a sense of community is strong, opportunities for people to interact with each other are many, and conditions that contribute to isolation and segregation are few.

CH-IP-7 Build upon community pride

Build upon the community pride, ethnicity, diversity through cultural activities, education and public events.

CH-IP-8 Celebrate and preserve cultural traditions

Encourage and support communities in celebrating, preserving, and transmitting their traditions through cultural activities, the arts, education and public events.

CH-IP-9 Foster Global Community Partnerships

Recognize Tacoma as a leader of global community partnerships and volunteer action aimed to further global understanding, friendship and peace.

CH-IP-10 Participate in cultural exchanges

Enhance the cultural and aesthetic character of the community through participation in the exchange of symbols of international goodwill, such as public art, plaques and other amenities.
