

April 24, 2018

Re: Futurewise Comments on the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan

Members of the City of Tacoma City Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan. For 28 years Futurewise has been the only state-wide non-profit dedicated to protecting farms, forests and working lands from development, and ensuring the health, equity and livability of our cities through the lens of the state's Growth Management Act. We perform our work through policy development, community engagement, advocacy, state-level lobbying and litigation – as a last resort. While the majority of our work is performed from the Seattle office, we currently maintain part-time staff in Pierce County and Tacoma, focused on a host of rural and urban development issues – and we are very supportive of the city's efforts to adopt the subarea plan.

The Mall Subarea Plan has the potential for transforming a critical Tacoma neighborhood into a model of positive urban growth, as well as implementing ground-breaking policies that could influence planning in other areas of the city. Futurewise supports the policies and goals as outlined in the city's plan materials: investment in job growth; increases in transportation access; implementation of affordable housing incentives, and promotion of resident and environment health by encouraging a variety of green infrastructure.

Our specific comments today focus on several elements of the plan that we feel are critically important for success in the long-term – and which we will be focused on supporting as the plan moves forward towards implementation:

Transportation – In order to reduce the demand for parking, and retain affordability in the Mall neighborhood, local and regional transit and transportation improvement options need to be investigated and implemented. We encourage the city to work closely with Pierce and Sound Transit to develop a transit access plan, and continue conversations with businesses on modifying parking requirements and street standards to include pedestrian, bicycle and green infrastructure improvements.

Schools – There are currently no schools within the 575-acre Tacoma Mall neighborhood. In order to create safe and accessible option for neighborhood children, we encourage the city to work with the school district to determine how to provide adequate services.

Parks, Open Space and the Environment – Creating a healthy environment for residents includes planning for parks and open space consistent with Metro Parks adopted 2018 Strategic Plan. We encourage the city to work with Parks to develop a parks and open space strategy for the Mall neighborhood, as well as consider long-term efforts to improve surface water management affecting the Foss and Chambers Creek waterways.

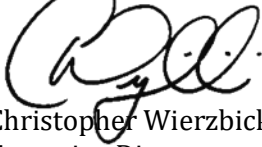
Housing and Displacement – We strongly support the implementation of an inclusionary zoning ordinance, and encourage the city to follow through with market studies that will identify how to

effectively implement these provisions. We are also very concerned about the potential for immediate displacement of low-income populations in the Mall neighborhood, and encourage the city to develop and implement displacement policies and work with local housing partners on displacement prevention options. We specifically encourage the city to engage low-income residents on displacement concerns early in the process, and allow the community to define the nature of the problem, and identify potential anti-displacement strategies.

Resource Development - Lastly, we encourage the city to identify relationships and tools that will aid in bringing resources to the implementation of the Mall plan, including reaching out to private sector partners to access resources - both locally and at the regional level - and following through on investigating funding mechanisms such as development impact fees.

In conclusion, we are very supportive of the city's direction on planning and implementing the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan. We are looking forward to working with elected officials, staff and community members to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved for residents, the city, the environment, and the South Sound region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wierzbicki', written over a faint, illegible background.

Christopher Wierzbicki, PE
Executive Director