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***City of Tacoma's Community and Economic Development Quarterly Newsletter***

***August 2018***

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## Welcome, Jeff Robinson!



Last month, the Community and Economic Development Office welcomed a new director into the fold. Jeff Robinson was confirmed by the Tacoma City Council in June and he began work as the director in the beginning of July. Before coming to the City of Tacoma, Jeff was the Community and Economic Director for the City of Seatac for ten years. Jeff has over thirty-five years of experience in the public, private, non-profit, and financial sectors in community, housing, affordable housing, and economic development. This experience includes leadership positions at the local, state, and regional levels. He is a longtime resident of Tacoma.

**"I am very excited to be here, to work with such a great team, and be part of the community and economic development ecosystem in Tacoma. I look forward to the challenges ahead."**

**- Jeff Robinson**



Jeff Robinson at CDA budget meeting this month (Courtesy of City of Tacoma)



Tacoma Dome District Pedestrians (Image Courtesy of City of Tacoma)

## Dome District Transit Oriented Development

The concept of Transit Oriented Development (“TOD”) is to create spaces to live, work, and play that grow around public transportation sites. HNTB’s America THINKS “Transit Oriented Development in America” survey in 2016 asked what Americans’ believe to be the biggest benefit of TOD. They responded: to reduce dependence on driving, allow residents to live, work, and play in the same area, and to reduce the area’s carbon footprint.

Tacoma’s prominent Transit Oriented District, the Dome District, is already Tacoma’s transportation hub – boasting the Tacoma Dome Station which offers Sound Transit busses, the Tacoma Link Light Rail, the Sounder Train between Lakewood and Seattle, the Pierce Transit Bus Shop with connections to the Pierce Transit Busses, a Greyhound bus station, and an Amtrak train station. However, to be labeled as as an area with TOD, there must be housing, not only transportation.

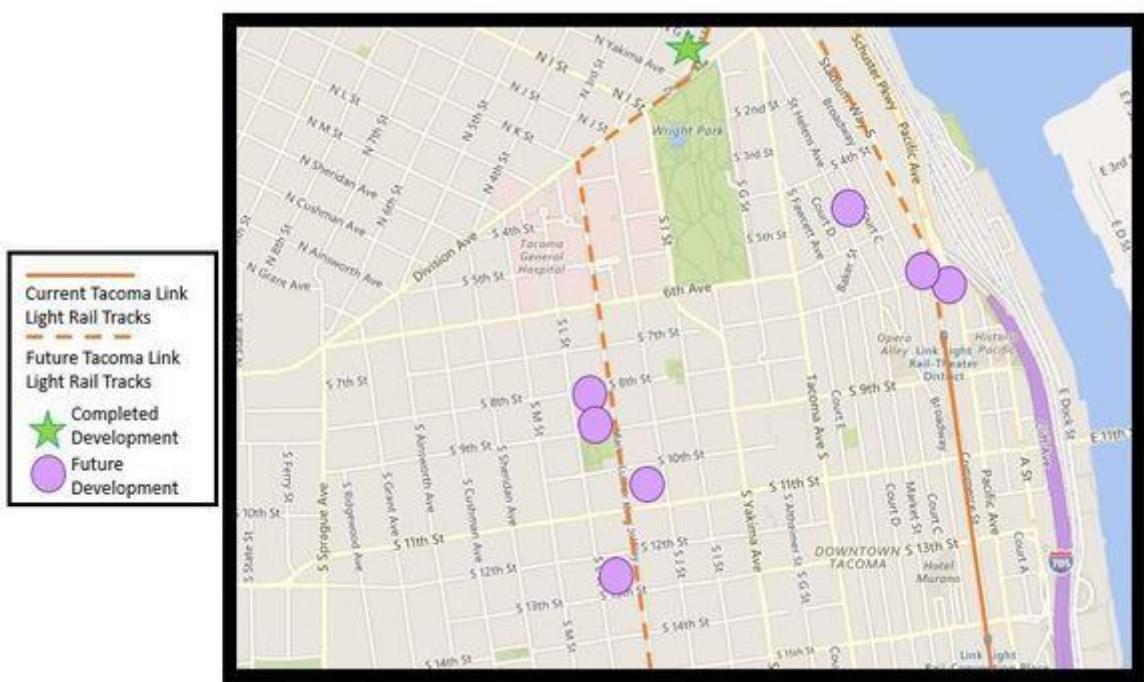
And now housing is coming to the Dome District:

**Koz Development** has broken ground on a 6 story tall building at 304 Puyallup Avenue consisting of 152 one and two bedroom micro units with views of the water. It will have 4,800 sf of ground level retail space and the apartments will be furnished. The developers chose to not include any parking spaces due to the Dome district being a transit-oriented neighborhood and near multiple transportation amenities. They have the intent of this development supporting an “affordable, car-free, minimalist lifestyle” and 20% of the micro units will be classified as affordable. The developers hope to attract University of Washington - Tacoma students (the development would be a quick ride on the Tacoma Link from the university) and families, as well.

**TRAX @ Tacoma Dome** is on a site formerly owned by Pierce Transit at 415 E 25th Street and is currently in permitting. It will be built adjacent to the Tacoma Link Light Rail tracks. The development will include 115 market rate apartments, a 17,000 sf farmer’s market space, 55 parking stalls, a rooftop common space for residents, and a dog run. It will be the first housing project in Tacoma to provide ORCA transit passes to all residents.

The Dome District continues to become more connected with Sound Transit’s announced expansion of the Tacoma Link Light Rail to the Hilltop neighborhood (start of service estimated to begin in 2022) and the Central Link’s growth from the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (construction to begin in 2025). Living in the Dome, with the completion of these developments, will enable residents to truly live a transit oriented life – decreasing their commute, living more sustainably, and being located in a vibrant neighborhood!

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## *Developments Along Tacoma Link Light Rail*

# Developments along Tacoma Link Light Rail Route Update

The Hilltop Tacoma Link Expansion – a Sound Transit project – will add 2.4 miles to the Tacoma Link Light Rail, nearly doubling its length. The majority of the neighborhoods that the light rail will travel through have been approved as Opportunity Zones at the federal level, providing extra incentive to invest in these areas. Construction of the rail is slated to begin this fall, and there are many notable structures that are planned along its track.

**Old City Hall:** The City of Tacoma recently received five different proposals for the purchase and renovation of the Old City Hall building on Pacific Avenue. The city expects to complete their review of these proposals by September 2018. The five proposals range from Class A office space, to a Tacoma History Museum, to studio apartments and artist apartments, to restaurants and event spaces. All of the proposals propose creating Old City Hall into a mixed-use development.

McMenamins Tacoma Elks Lodge: This highly anticipated renovation of the historic Elks Lodge, located at 565 Broadway, is slated to open in 2019 and work is currently underway. McMenamins Inc. is in the process of transforming this historic-six-level-building to include three restaurants, a brew pub, a music venue, and a 45 unit hotel. Additionally, the Elks Lodge is projected to employ between 150 and 200 part and full time positions. And, it will be easily accessible from the Tacoma Link Light Rail.

415 St Helens: This 247 unit high rise apartment project is currently in permitting with the City of Tacoma. It will have four levels of parking, and nine stories of apartment units overlooking Commencement Bay. It will be only two blocks away from the new Tacoma Link Light Rail line and proposes street and street scape improvements on St Helens Avenue.

Stadium Apartments: Along the proposed new Tacoma Link Light Rail tracks is the brand new Stadium Apartments complex that recently opened up at 102 N G Street. It has 172 units, which are

made up of one and two bedroom apartments, and overlooks Wright Park, Stadium High School, and Commencement Bay.



*Completed Stadium Apartments Building on North G Street*

824 MLK: Koz Development proposes to build a mixed income, mixed use TOD apartment complex consisting of a minimum 156 market rate units (20% of which will be offered to low-income households below 80% of the area's median income under the multi-family tax exemption program), \$7,500 square feet of commercial retail, 33 parking spaces, two car sharing spaces, scooters for rent and ample bike storage, and a rooftop deck. The unit mix will include studios, one, two, & three bedroom, and live-work lofts. The proposed project schedule anticipates a 15 month construction schedule with a start date of spring of 2019. The proposed development will be built adjacent to the Tacoma Link Light Rail track, and two blocks from a proposed stop.

Valhalla Court: An infill mixed use and mixed income development will open in September in the Hilltop District. Valhalla Court is a mixed income 26-unit new construction project that includes two front facing work-live loft units. Nine of the apartments will be set aside for low-income residents. Included in the building's design are two public art pieces created by Hilltop artists. This development will be located along the Tacoma Link Light Rail as well, another instance of Tacoma's burgeoning TOD emphasis.

8th and MLK Senior Affordable Housing project – Mercy Housing: Proposed apartment complex at the corner of 8th Street and Martin Luther King Jr Way that will consist of a minimum 58 units of senior affordable housing units (serving households below 50% of the area's median income), a large community room with activities and services tailored to the residents, a roof top outdoor space

and three parking stalls. The unit mix will include one-bedroom and studios. The proposed project schedule anticipates a two-year construction schedule with a start date of September 2019.

Martin Luther King Jr. Mixed Use: This highly anticipated development, featuring over 200 residential units, ground level retail, and subterranean parking, is scheduled to begin construction in late spring 2019. This is at the same time as the Tacoma Link Light Rail will begin construction, as well.



*Rendering of Martin Luther King Jr Mixed Use Development (Courtesy of JGA)*

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## Opportunity Zone Update

In October, there will be a state level meeting in Seattle about the Opportunity Zone program in Washington State and its implications state-wide. Two of Tacoma's Opportunity Zone census tracts are located along the Tacoma Link Light Rail expansion - census tract 61400 encompasses Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and census tract 61601 encompasses the Old City Hall area. These opportunity zones will encourage growth and development in these areas, but even more so due to the planned Hilltop Tacoma Link Expansion.

Additionally, Pierce Transit is planning its \$150 million Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route. This route will run from downtown Tacoma, down Pacific Avenue/SR-7, into Spanaway. The BRT route will run through another Opportunity Zone, census tract 624000, which includes the Lincoln District area (South 38th to South 56th from Park to SR-7) – allowing the possibility for more TOD on the Tacoma Eastside.

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## We Need Your Help!

Each year the [Economic Development Board for Tacoma Pierce County \(EDB\)](#) assembles and publishes the Major Employers List. It is a great resource for the community and they are in the process of updating their list for 2018.

From their website: "Our goal is that every employer with 100 or more full-time equivalent (FTE) employees working in Pierce County be included. Have between 50-99 FTEs? Your small-but-mighty company will be published on a special "Ones to Watch" list."

If the above statement applies to your business, please click [here](#) and fill out their short survey.

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## Economic Development Resources

The Community and Economic Development Department has a website to help attract and grow business. Visit [MakelTacoma.com](#) to learn more about doing business in Tacoma.

Searching for a property or vacant land? Use the City's site selection tool to find your next property [here](#).

Additional information on business analytics are available [here](#).

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## Special Events



See upcoming events that have been permitted by the City of Tacoma [here](#).

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