



**BOLD VISIONS & SMART SOLUTIONS FOR
AN EVER-CHANGING FUTURE**

APPLYING AN EQUITY AND TRAUMA-INFORMED ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

CASE STUDY: SOUTH TACOMA NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

WASHINGTON APA CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 8, 2025

South Tacoma

Neighborhood Plan

City of Tacoma



Photo Credit: Ryan Givens



June 2025



City of Tacoma
Neighborhood
Planning
Program



AGENDA

- Introductions
- Overview of trauma-informed engagement frameworks
- Case Study: South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan
- Panel discussion
- Audience Q&A





South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan



PANEL:

- Alejandra Villeda - Associate Planner, City of Tacoma
- Alicia Klein - Immunization & Provider Engagement Program Manager, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- Lauren Hoogkamer - Principal Planner, City of Tacoma
- Perlita Payne - Neighborhood Services Manager, Tacoma Public Library
- Moderator: Anneka Olson - Community Planner, City of Seattle

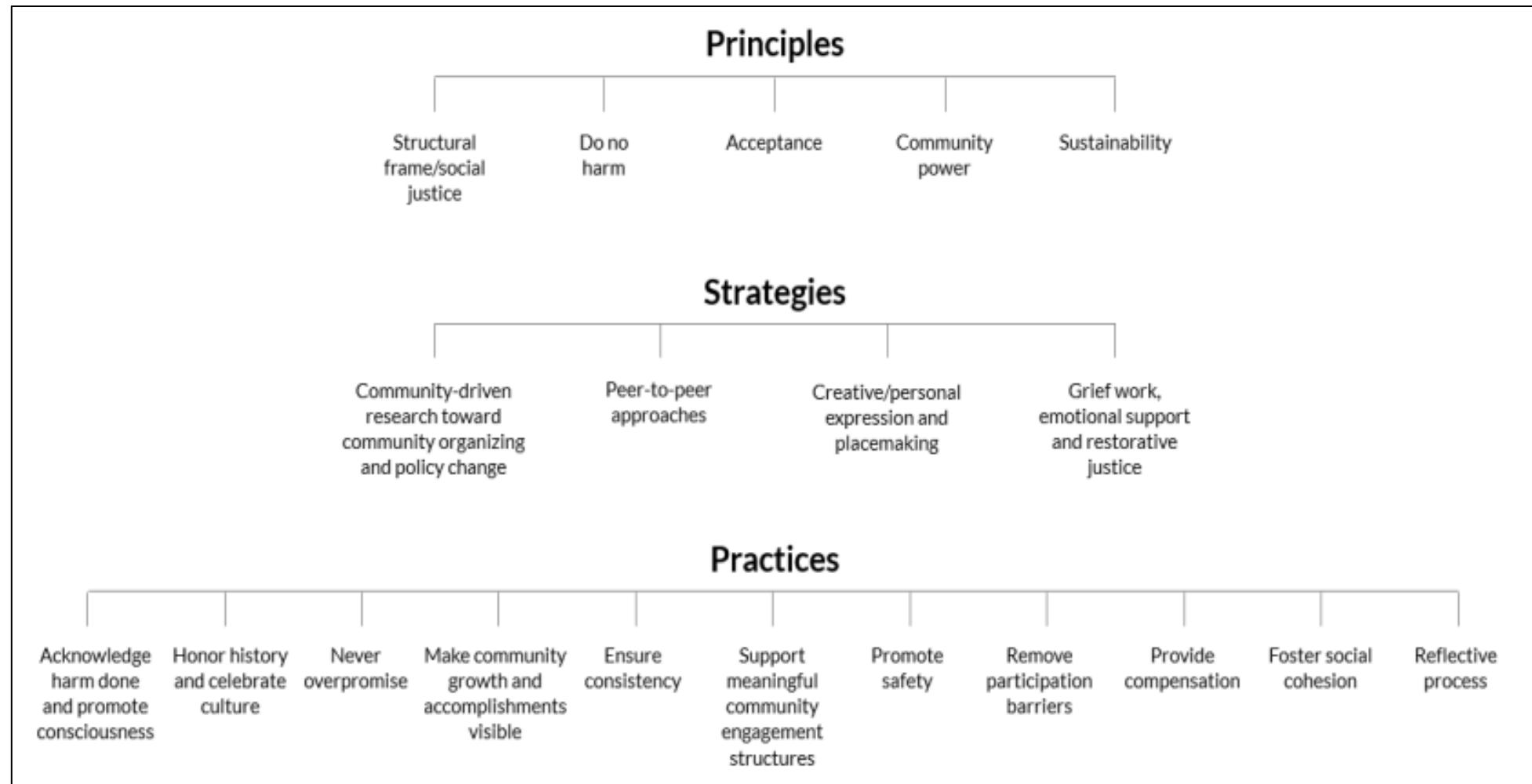


TRAUMA-INFORMED ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

INTRO TO TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

- **“The key to closing equity gaps and resolving climate vulnerability is direct participation by impacted communities in the development and implementation of solutions and policy decisions that directly impact them”** (Gonzalez, 2019).
- Government is an institute of structural oppression that systemically perpetuates White supremacy and power imbalances (Balaram, 2024).
- Historically, the US government has and continues to harm BIPOC, LGBTQ, low-income, and other underrepresented communities (Menakem, 2021).
- Government then punishes people for how they react to severe inequity and lack of resources, e.g., crime, mental illness, acts of rebellion (Sheppard, 2020).
- **“Part of this trauma is the result of an extensive history of broken promises made by those intervening in marginalized communities. It is essential for community-building and engagement efforts to be realistic and transparent about new opportunities and to be truthful about what they are offering. This requires stakeholders to acknowledge these community-level traumas”** (Falkenburger, E., Arena, O. & Wolin, J., 2018).

TRAUMA-INFORMED ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS





TRAUMA-INFORMED ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

SOUTH TACOMA NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CASE STUDY

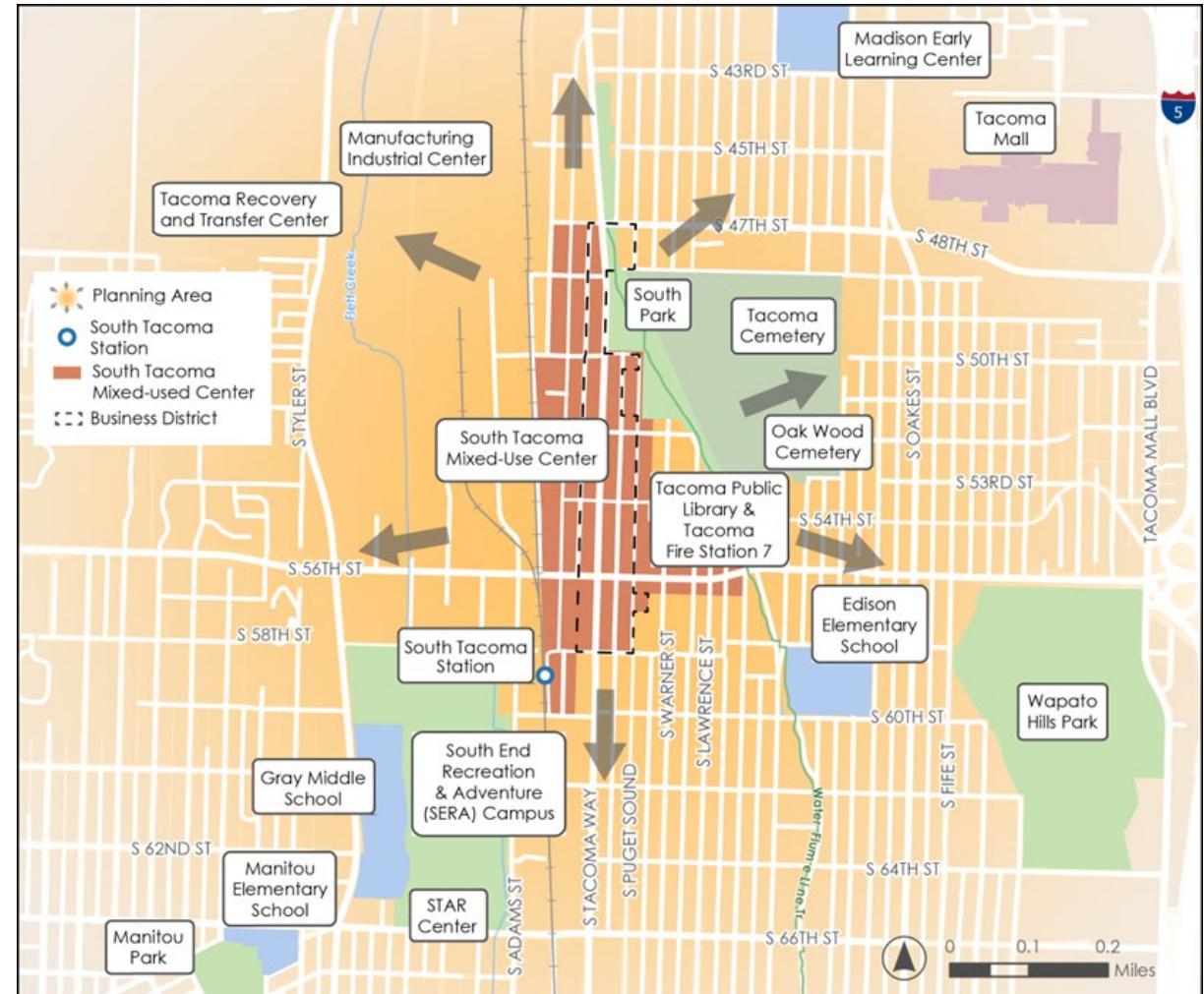


Scan to learn more about the plan!



South Tacoma Neighborhood Background

- **Comprehensive Plan alignment**
 - Mixed-Use Center and Neighborhood Business District
 - Regional rail; planned high-capacity transit
 - Historic resources
 - Displacement risk
- **History of lower engagement** and resources from the City
 - Equity index: “very low” to “moderate”
- **Coordination for policy and engagement**
 - High-profile and contentious issues
 - Industrial Impacts





ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

- **1,300+ “engagements” with community members:**
- **• 4 focused community events and meetings:** 200+ participants
- **• 13+ interview conversations** with key collaborators
- **• 2 online community surveys and 1 interactive map:** 200+ replies
- **• 2 phases of multilingual outreach**(in 6 languages): 200+ responses in Vietnamese, Spanish, Korean, Russian, and Ukrainian
- **• 2 walking tours:** 50+ participants
- **• 4 pop-up events:** 190 comments received
- **• 3 focus groups:** 24 participants
- **• Community voting at 3 community events:** 300+ participants
- **• Community briefings** (Neighborhood Council; Business District)
- **• Steering Group:** 30 members

STEERING GROUP

Diverse mix of residents, local organizations, and business owners:

- South Tacoma Neighborhood Council - 2)
- South Tacoma Business District Association (2)
- Local business and property owners (4)
- Residents representing transportation, housing, environment, arts, education (10)
- Local organizations, including South Tacoma library, STAR Center, APCC, Health Department, local manufacturing
- Districts 3 and 5 Council Members



The South Tacoma Steering Group requested that we apply a trauma-informed framework to recognize the impacts of harms the community has faced and support accountability, transparency, healing, and reconciliation.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN VALUES

- **Healthy environment, safety, and comfort:** Healthy air, soil, water and green spaces; safety and comfort for people walking and biking; child-friendly
- **Easy access to amenities:** Access to schools, food, jobs, parks, retail, recreation; spaces for fun and reflection
- **Economic prosperity and affordability:** Quality jobs; maintaining retail and industrial jobs; support for new and existing industries to evolve; ability to build intergenerational wealth
- **Equity and opportunity:** Acknowledging past divestment and negative impacts; resiliency; equitable investment; amplifying structurally excluded voices; policies and programs that provide opportunity to our neighbors; access to housing
- **Sense of community and identity (belonging):** Inclusive and welcoming neighborhood that celebrates diverse identities; celebration of history and sense of place; ability to remain in the neighborhood
- **Transparency and trust:** Honor prior efforts in South Tacoma; clarity and openness, transparent decision-making; reconciliation; city follow-through; moving at the speed of trust

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOALS

- **Transportation, Mobility, and Connectivity**

- Safe Streets
- Walkability & Connectivity

- **Health and Environment**

- Healthy, Sustainable Environment

- **Affordability**

- Affordable Community

- **Sense of Place and Community**

- *Inviting, Accessible, Beautiful*
- *Celebrate History & Identities*
- *Sense of Community & Gathering*

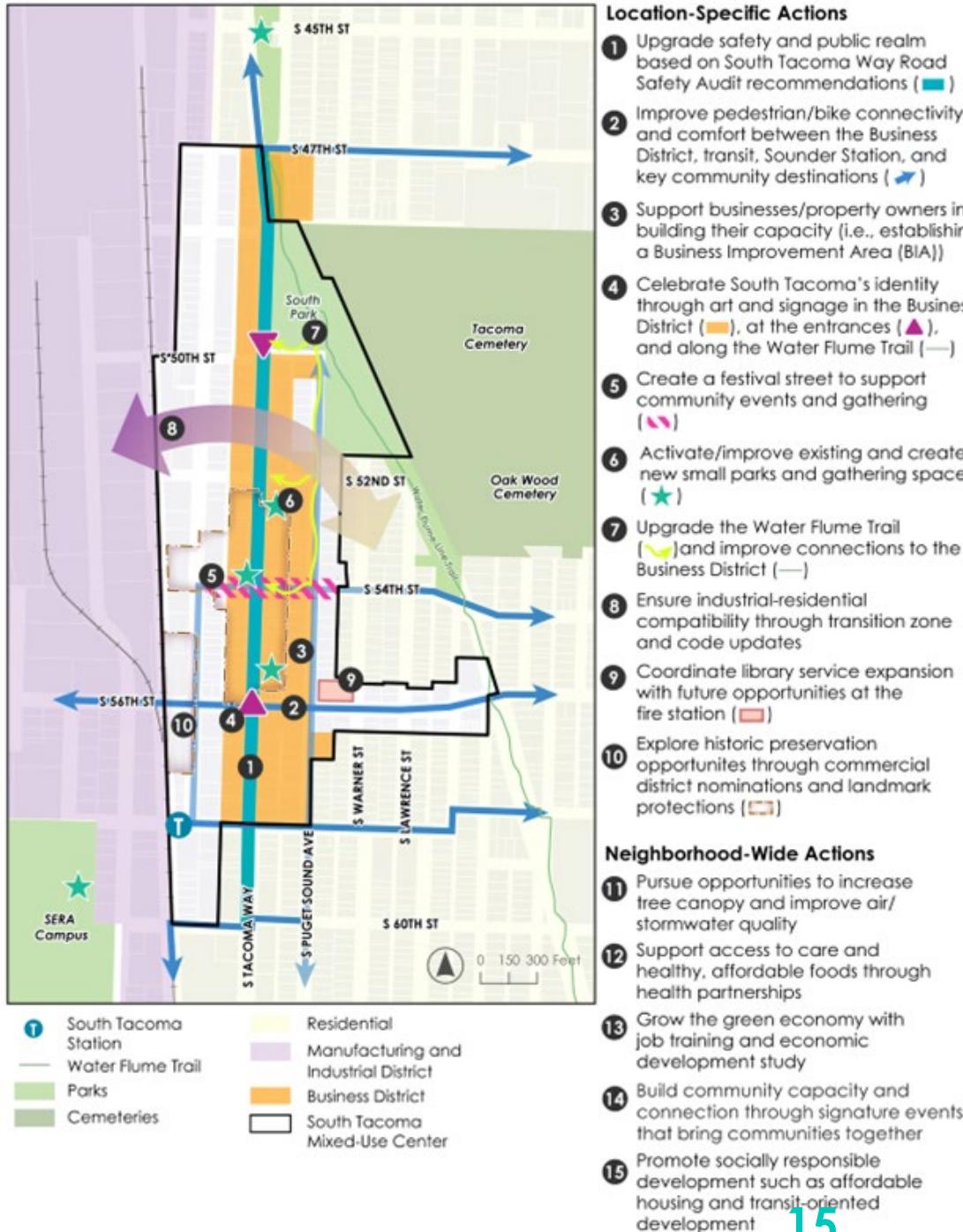
- **Economic Opportunity and Development**

- *Active Neighborhood Center*
- *Socially Responsible Development*
- *Green Economic Opportunity*

MAJOR IDEAS SUMMARY

Location-specific actions:

1. Upgrade safety and public realm through South Tacoma Way corridor safety improvements
2. Connect pedestrian and bike connectivity between key destinations
3. Support business district capacity-building and study a Business Improvement Area (BIA)
4. Celebrate South Tacoma's identity with signage and art
5. Create a festival street on South 54th Street
6. Upgrade Water Flume Trail and improve connections to business district
7. Activate/improve existing small parks and gathering spaces



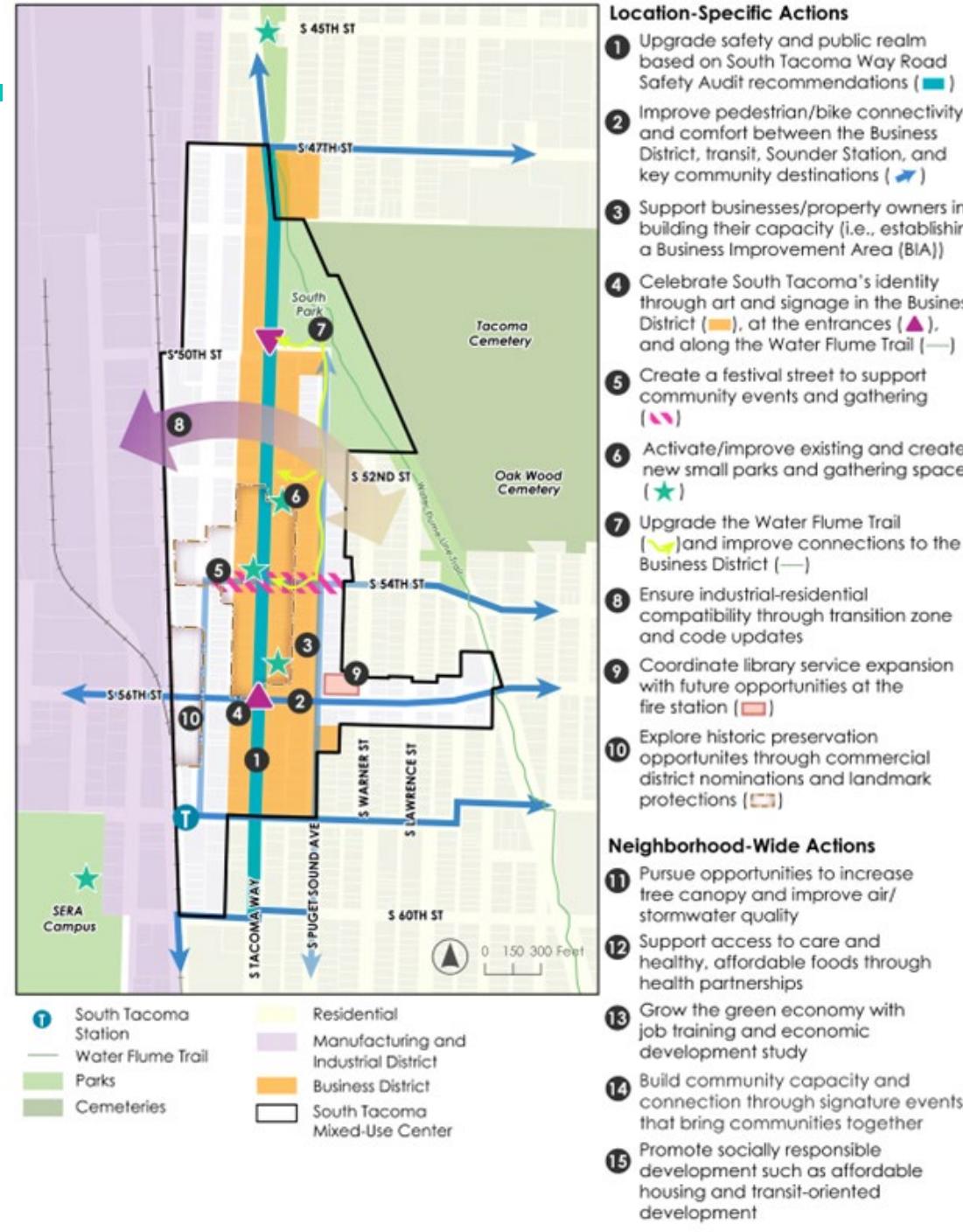
MAJOR IDEAS SUMMARY

Location-specific actions (continued):

8. Coordinate library service expansion
9. Ensure industrial compatibility through code updates
10. Explore historic preservation opportunities

Neighborhood-wide actions:

11. Increase tree canopy and improve air and stormwater quality
12. Support access to care through health partnerships and healthy food
13. Green economy development study
14. Build community through family-friendly events
15. Promote socially responsible development (e.g. open spaces, affordable housing)



PANEL DISCUSSION

- Importance of taking a trauma-informed approach in South Tacoma
- Collaborative approach between Steering Group members and City Staff to challenge status quo
- Staff and community positionality
- Tools for centering community perspective and voice in equitable engagement
- Language and accessibility strategy
- Efforts to sustain community trust through program ending



AUDIENCE Q&A





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