



CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington
Urban Design and Planning
URBDP 507A: Planning Studio

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INFILL HOUSING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



Introduction

The City of Tacoma is experiencing rapid increases in rent and property prices, alongside a rise in the unsheltered homeless population. Residents of Tacoma have cited challenges associated with housing affordability, including gentrification, generational continuity, and accessibility to good wages. As one response to housing affordability concerns, the City of Tacoma is working to incentivize the development of certain housing types by piloting the Residential Infill Pilot Program.

“Affordability is more than just a number or percentage of income; it’s dignity, location, safety. It’s that which does not burden you.”

— Tacoma Resident

Our research tasks as students of URBDP 507A Planning Studio were to identify process improvements for the program and to understand what the potential growth and impact of the project would be once codified. We were particularly interested in creating incentive zones for infill development, looking at subsidy and affordability, and creating a stronger process for community engagement and neighbor feedback.

Under the new pilot program, the development of new homes in established neighborhoods has the potential to allow more people to live where they want, in the type of housing most sensible for them and their families.

Methods & Approach

Our team’s approach to the project has been an inductive process. Each stage has informed the next.

Community Meeting

The feedback we heard from local residents helped us to identify priorities, establish a study question, and frame the scope of our work.

Precedent Studies

We examined infill programs in other cities in the Northwest, which generated ideas that could potentially apply to Tacoma.

Policy Analysis

We explored the feasibility of financial incentives and process improvements to strengthen the long-term success of the program.

Mapping Techniques

We placed a priority on visualizing and communicating findings as they relate spatially to regions and neighborhoods of interest.

Stakeholder Meeting

We presented final recommendations to City of Tacoma staff and other invested housing representatives.



Community meeting.

Initial Findings

Following our research and analysis, we determined three categories of process improvements: code changes, information resources, and financial tools.

Adapted from precedent programs, the items under these categories represent tools that we determine to be most applicable to Tacoma and the Residential Infill Pilot Program.

“The housing issue in Tacoma can be defined by issues of viability and affordability; both the need to provide new housing options and the opportunity to live in them.” — Studio 507A

