

STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 10, 2023

TO: Pierce County Planning Commission

FROM: Angie Silva, Long Range Planning Manager

BY: Erika Rhett Hunt, Long Range Planning Supervisor

APPLICATION NO: 994599 / Land Use Permit No. 994728

APPLICANT: Tacoma Water

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT – South Hill Community Plan Amendment to establish the Public Institution (PI) designation within the Plan Area.

NOTICE: Notice of the Planning Commission public hearing was published in the Tacoma News Tribune on January 3, 2023.

SEPA: A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and Determination of Non-Significance was issued on SEPA on December 27, 2022. The 14-day comment period concludes January 10, 2023.

ATTACHMENT: **Attachment A: LUAC Draft Staff Report**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends approval of the proposal. The allowance of the Public Institution (PI) land use designation within the South Hill Community Plan aligns with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan to provide efficient public services and infrastructure throughout the urban areas of the County. This proposal also has a companion amendment with application number 994600/land use permit number 994729 that redesignates three parcels to PI.

If approved as proposed, the Community Plan would need to be amended as further described below as well as amendment to Title Chapter 18A.29.010 South Hill - Urban Zone Classifications to add the PI zoning and identify permitted uses consistent with PI zoning in other areas.

LUAC RECOMMENDATION

Following timely and effective public notice published in the Tacoma News Tribune on November 21, 2022, the South Hill Advisory Commission (SHAC) held a public meeting on December 5, 2022. The SHAC, with 6 of 9 commissioners present, unanimously recommended approval of the proposal.

PROPOSAL

The proposal would allow a new land use designation, PI, to be applied within the South Hill Community Plan area. The proposal is accompanied by a companion area-wide map amendment (#994729) to redesignate Tacoma Water’s McMillin Reservoir property as PI. This would allow Tacoma Public Utilities to apply for a permit to build a communications tower on the property.

The purpose of the PI land use designation and zoning is to recognize property that serves the cultural, educational, recreational, and public service needs of the community.

The specific amendments proposed are shown in the excerpts of the South Hill Community Plan below. Highlighted text shows language that has been proposed to be added.

South Hill Community Plan (Pages J-29 – J-30)

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ZONE CLASSIFICATIONS

Land use designations indicate the type, intensity, and density of land uses. There are a total of 10 land use designations and 17 implementing zone classifications in the plan area.

Table J-1: Land Use Designations and Zone Classifications

Land Use Designation	Zone Classification	Acres	Zone %	Designation Total Acres
Corridor (C)	Urban Corridor (UCOR)	419.2	3.46%	859.5
	Neighborhood Corridor (NCOR)	440.3	3.64%	
Community Center (CC)	CC	41.1	0.34%	41.1
Employment Center (EC)	EC	886.7	7.32%	886.7
High Density Residential District (HRD)	Moderate High Density Residential (MHR)	13.2	0.11%	13.2
High Density Single Family (HSF)	HSF	583.2	4.82%	583.2
Master Planned Community (MPC)	CC	145.8	1.20%	2,628.9
	HSF	116.6	0.96%	
	MHR	325.0	2.68%	
	MPC	1,671.7	13.81%	
	MSF	369.8	3.05%	

Land Use Designation	Zone Classification	Acres	Zone %	Designation Total Acres
Moderate Density Single Family (MSF)	MSF	5,629.4	46.50%	6,558.3
	Residential Resource (RR)	928.9	7.67%	
Neighborhood Center (NC)	NC	12.3	0.10%	25.3
	Residential-Office-Civic (ROC)	13.0	0.11%	
Park and Recreation (PR)	PR	122.7	1.01%	122.7
Public Institution (PI)	PI			
Towne Center (TCTR)	TCTR	387.2	3.20%	387.2
Grand Total		12,106.1	100.0%	

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PUBLIC INSTITUTION

The Public Institution land use designation serves to provide for institutional uses such as schools, utilities, and municipal uses. The Public Institution zone classification is the implementing zone for the Public Institution land use designation. It is intended to provide for the siting of public owned facilities and institutions.

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LAND USE POLICIES

PUBLIC INSTITUTION

SH LU-23 Recognize major parcels of land serving the cultural, educational, recreational, and public service needs of the community through the Public Institution designation.

SH LU-23.1 The Public Institution designation may be applied to urban or rural institutions and facilities.

SH LU-24 Identify lands owned by governmental agencies for public use or benefit with the Public Institution designation or other land use designation that supports and protects these uses.

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES

Procedures for Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, [PCC 19C.10](#), require that the merits of all amendments to the Plan be evaluated based on the following:

1. *The effect upon the rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan.*

The proposal to add the PI land use designation does not affect the rate of growth, development, and conversation of land as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. *The effect upon the County's capacity to provide adequate public facilities.*

The proposal supports the preservation of lands for public facility and utility service.

3. *The effect upon the rate of population and employment growth.*

The proposed land use designation has minimal impacts on the rate of population and employment growth. The proposal allows for the continuation of infrastructure and utility use to support existing and future growth.

4. *Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable.*

This proposal is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan goals:

- **GOAL U-20** Ensure adequate water supply for all uses that support growth.
- **GOAL U-26** Promote reliable water service.

This proposal is also consistent with the South Hill Community Plan. **GOAL SH U-5** notes “The provision of adequate domestic water supplies is a crucial component of supporting population growth...”

5. *The effect upon general land values or housing costs.*

The application of the PI land use designation is intended to reflect the existing use of the McMillin Reservoir property and the permitted uses would be limited to a public facility or utility. The general land value would not be impacted.

6. *Whether capital improvements or expenditures, including transportation, are being made or completed as expected.*

Not applicable. This change in land use would not require additional capital facilities to support the intended use. If the property applies for future permits, the proposed development would be reviewed for necessary capital at the time of application submittal. The application will need to meet the requirements of the following Peirce County Code Titles:

- Title 17A - Construction and Infrastructure Regulations – Site Development and Stormwater Drainage;
- Title 17B - Construction and Infrastructure Regulations – Road and Bridge Design and Construction Standards; and,
- Title 18C - Development Regulations – Storm Drainage and Site Development.

However, the change in land use allows the water utility on this site to potentially provide better coordinated local and regional service, which helps to maintain existing investments in

a public water utility and provide more efficient service to the region.

7. *Whether the initiated amendment conforms to the requirements of the GMA, is internally consistent with the Plan and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies for Pierce County.*

The proposal is consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Vision 2050, and the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) for Pierce County.

RCW 36.70A.150 of the GMA directs counties to designate lands for public purposes, including the collection and retention of potable water, designating parcels with existing water towers as public institution assists with this directive.

Vision 2050 MPP-PS-7 and MPP-PS-23 direct local governments to coordinate services for public utilities including potable water in urban growth areas.

Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies UGA-13 directs the County to “adopt measures to ensure that growth and development are timed and phased consistent with the provision of adequate public facilities and services;” and later defines ‘public facilities’ to include domestic water systems.

The following table lists the existing policies with which this proposal demonstrates consistency.

GMA	MPPs	Comprehensive Plan	CPPs
RCW 36.70A.150	MPP-PS-7	GOAL LU-126	EC-6
	MPP-PS-23	GOAL LU-127	UGA-5
		GOAL SH U-5	

8. *The effect upon critical areas and natural resource lands.*

The change in land use designation is not expected to affect critical areas or natural resource lands. If the proposal is approved, the review and identification of potential critical areas would occur at the time a development project is submitted to Pierce County. If critical areas are present, the project would require a project-level State Environmental Policy (SEPA) review and ensure consistency with Pierce County Code 18E - Development Regulations – Critical Areas.

9. *Consistency with locational criteria in the Comprehensive Plan and application requirements established by this Chapter.*

Not applicable.

10. *The effect upon other considerations as deemed necessary by the Department. (Other pertinent information).*

The companion amendment (#994729) proposes to redesignate Tacoma Water’s McMillin Reservoir property as PI in the South Hill Community Plan area. The Tacoma Water property

provides domestic water supplies and is a crucial component of supporting existing and future population growth. Implementation of the land use designation of Public Institution (PI) in the South Hill Community Plan along with the companion amendment and companion zoning and development regulation amendments will improve Tacoma Water's ability to provide reliable water service to customers in Pierce County.

EQUITY

If this amendment and its companion amendment (#994729) are approved, the applicant intends to pursue permits for the construction of a communications tower which will improve the reliability of water service to customers across Pierce County in the case of a natural disaster. Ensuring resilient and reliable public services will improve livability, accessibility, economy, and environmental health outcomes throughout Pierce County.

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

If approved as proposed, amend Title Chapter 18A.29.010 South Hill - Urban Zone Classifications to add the PI zoning and identify permitted uses consistent with PI zoning in other areas.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMENT

Consistent with Pierce County Code (PCC), the biennial Comprehensive Plan Amendment application period was held July 1 to August 1, 2022. This application was received and deemed completed by the Department. Pierce County Council initiated further review of the proposal through R2022-135. The following notified the public of the proposal and provided opportunities for comment:

- In October 2022, the Department sent letters soliciting cities/towns, agencies, school district, fire districts, water service providers and tribal notification of the initiated applications.
- On December 5, 2022, following notice in the Tacoma News Tribune, the Department met with the South Hill Advisory Commission.
- On December 27, 2022, a SEPA determination was issued.
- On December 27, 2022, a notice for the Planning Commissions January 10th Study Session was published in the Tacoma News Tribune.
- On January 3, 2023, a notice for the Planning Commissions January 17th Public Hearing was published in the Tacoma News Tribune.
- On January 10, 2023, a notice for the Planning Commissions January 24th Deliberations was published in the Tacoma News Tribune.

Written comments received are summarized below.

Date	Commenter	Summary of Comments	Response
10/31/22	Kenneth Rice (Pierce County Fire Marshal)	1) Does not see any perceived issues with the amendments from an emergency management perspective. Amendments overall will need to follow PCC 17C.60 (International Fire Code).	1) Comment noted. This is a non-project action to amend the Community Plan associated land use designation and zoning classification. At the time of permit application, compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements will be needed for approval.
11/1/22	Susan Cutrell (Parkland Light & Water Company)	1) Parkland Light and Water Company has no issues with the proposed amendments.	1) Comment noted.
11/16/22	Thomas Seigel (Bethel School District)	1) Proposed amendments do not affect the Bethel School District. 2) Requests proactive engagement on 2024 Comprehensive Plan update process.	1) Comment noted. 2) On 11/30/22, the Department responded with previous outreach efforts with the School District in July 2022 and the SEPA scoping period conducted from September 1 to October 2, 2022. Department is committed to working with all school districts and providers through-out the multi-year project including upcoming engagement on the capital facilities plan.

Application No. 994728: COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT – South Hill Community Plan Amendment to establish the Public Institution designation within the Plan Area.

Applicant: Tacoma Power

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposal would allow a new land use designation, Public Institution (PI), to be applied within the South Hill Community Plan area. The proposal is accompanied by a companion amendment (#994729) to designate Tacoma Water’s McMillin Reservoir property as PI. This would allow Tacoma Public Utilities to apply for a permit to build a microwave tower on the property.

The purpose of the PI land use designation and zoning is to recognize property that serves the cultural, educational, recreational, and public service needs of the community. The PI land use designation and zoning classification is applied in many areas of the county, including areas outside of community plan areas as well as within community plan areas.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Amend the South Hill Community Plan to establish the Public Institution designation within the Plan Area. The specific language proposed for amendment is shown in the excerpts below. Highlighted text shows language that has been proposed to be added.

(Pages J-29 – J-30)

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ZONE CLASSIFICATIONS

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	HSF	116.6	0.96%	
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SH LU-23.1 The Public Institution designation may be applied to urban or rural institutions and facilities.

SH LU-24 Identify lands owned by governmental agencies for public use or benefit with the Public Institution designation or other land use designation that supports and protects these uses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposal. The allowance of the PI land use designation within the South Hill Community Plan aligns with the intention of Comprehensive Plan policies to provide public services and infrastructure to the South Hill community.

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

If approved as proposed, amend Title Chapter 18A.29.010 South Hill - Urban Zone Classifications to add the PI zoning and identify permitted uses consistent with PI zoning in other areas.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Procedures for Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, [PCC 19C.10](#), requires that the merits of all amendments to the Plan be evaluated based on the following ([PCC 19C.10.060 A](#)):

1. The effect upon the rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan.

The proposal to add the PI land use designation does not affect the rate of growth, development, and conversation of land as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. The effect upon the County's capacity to provide adequate public facilities.

The proposal supports the preservation of lands for public facility and utility service.

3. The effect upon the rate of population and employment growth.

The proposed land use designation has minimal impacts on the rate of population and employment growth. The proposal allows for the continuation of infrastructure and utility use to support existing and future growth.

4. Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable.

This proposal would establish the PI designation in the community plan and is not contrary to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the South Hill Community plan. The South Hill Community Plan does not contain policies to address this topic, however the comprehensive plan notes:

- Comp Plan:
 - **GOAL U-26** Promote reliable water service.
 - **GOAL U-20** Ensure adequate water supply for all uses that support growth.

This amendment is one of two companion amendments. The partner amendment (#994729) would redesignate specific properties as PI and a separate staff report on that application has been prepared separately.

5. The effect upon general land values or housing costs.

The application of the PI land use designation is intended to reflect existing public facilities and the permitted uses would be limited to a public facility or utility. The general land value would not be impacted.

6. Whether capital improvements or expenditures, including transportation, are being made or completed as expected.

Not applicable. This change in land use would not require additional capital facilities to support the intended use. If the property applies for future permits, the proposed development would be reviewed for necessary capital at the time of application submittal. The application will need to meet the requirements of the following Peirce County Code Titles:

- Title 17A - Construction and Infrastructure Regulations – Site Development and Stormwater Drainage;
- Title 17B - Construction and Infrastructure Regulations – Road and Bridge Design and Construction Standards; and,
- Title 18C - Development Regulations – Storm Drainage and Site Development.

7. Whether the initiated amendment conforms to the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA), is internally consistent with the Plan and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) for Pierce County.

The proposal is consistent with the Growth Management Act, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Vision 2050, and Pierce County CPPs.

RCW 36.70A.150 of the GMA directs counties to designate lands for public purposes, including the collection and retention of potable water, designating parcels with existing water towers as public institution assists with this directive.

Vision 2050 MPP-PS-7 and MPP-PS-23 directs city and county governments to coordinate services for public utilities including potable water in urban growth areas.

Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies UGA-5 directs the County to “adopt measures to ensure that growth and development are timed and phased consistent with the provision of adequate public facilities and services;” and later defines ‘public facilities’ to include domestic water systems.

8. The effect upon critical areas and natural resource lands.

The change in land use designation is not expected to affect critical areas or natural resource lands. If the proposal is approved, the review and identification of potential critical areas would occur at the time a development project is submitted to Pierce County. If critical areas are present, the project would be regulated by Piece County Code 18E – Development Regulations – Critical Areas.

9. Consistency with locational criteria in the Comprehensive Plan and application requirements established by this Chapter.

The proposal is consistent with the locational criteria in the Comprehensive Plan. This proposal is consistent with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, and in line with the spirit of the following provisions, as creating and assigning the public institutions designation would assist with:

- **GOAL U-26** Promote reliable water service.
- **GOAL U-20** Ensure adequate water supply for all uses that support growth.

10. The effect upon other considerations as deemed necessary by the Department. (Other pertinent information).

The companion amendment (#994729) proposes to apply the PI land use designation owned by Tacoma Water in the South Hill Community Plan area. The Tacoma Water property provides domestic water supplies and is a crucial component of supporting existing and future population growth. Including in the South Hill Community Plan the land use designation of Public Institution (PI) with the added requested implementation of development regulation revisions will allow for a process to improve Tacoma Water's ability to adequately provide water service to customers in Pierce County.

EQUITY

This proposal should have no negative impact on equity and could potentially lead to improvements in all equity indicators, depending on what is developed/added to the parcels once they are designated as public institution. In particular, maintaining a high quality and adequate volume of water supply would improve livability, economy, and education scores.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA)

The proposal is consistent with the Growth Management Act.

RCW 36.70A.150 Identification of lands useful for public purposes.

Each county and city that is required have a comprehensive land use plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall identify lands for public purposes such as utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses. The county shall work with the state and the cities within its borders to identify areas of shared need for public facilities. The jurisdictions within the county shall prepare a prioritized list of lands necessary for the identified public uses including an estimated date by which the acquisition will be needed.

MULTICOUNTY PLANNING POLICIES (MPPs) (VISION 2050)

The proposal is consistent with the Vision 2050 MPPs.

Public Services Section: Public Service Policies

MPP-PS-7 Obtain urban services from cities or appropriate regional service providers. Encourage cities, counties, and special purpose districts, including sewer, water, and fire districts, to coordinate planning efforts, agree on optimal ways to provide efficient service, and support consolidations that would improve service to the public.

MPP-PS-23 Promote coordination among local and tribal governments and water providers and suppliers to meet long-term water needs in the region in a manner that supports the region's growth strategy.

PIERCE COUNTY COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES (CPPs)

The proposal is consistent with CPPs which specify a need for the County to plan for and maintain public facilities, which includes the water systems present on these parcels.

Economic Development and Employment

Ec-6. The County, and each municipality in the County, shall work to strengthen existing businesses and industries and to add to the diversity of economic opportunity and employment by:

6.6 striving to maintain adequate public facilities and service levels;

Urban Growth Areas, Urban Public Services

UGA-5. Within the delineated urban growth areas, the County, and each municipality in the County, shall adopt measures to ensure that growth and development are timed and phased consistent with the provision of adequate public facilities and services.

5.2 "Public facilities" include:

5.2.2 Domestic water systems;

PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposal is consistent with the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan.

Utilities Element: Domestic Water systems

GOAL LU-126 Recognize major parcels of land serving the cultural, educational, recreational, and public service needs of the community through the Public Institution designation.

- **LU-126.1** The Public Institution designation may be applied to urban or rural institutions and facilities.

GOAL LU-127 Identify lands owned by governmental agencies for public use or benefit with the Public Institution designation or other land use designation that supports and protects these uses.

LU-131.2 Redesignation of single parcels or single ownership should be allowed in appropriate circumstances such as the recognition of public parks, schools, and other public institutions, or proposals involving Master Planned Communities, Master Planned Resorts, Employment Based Planned Communities, or New Fully Contained Communities.