



# **Cushman and Adams Substations Future Use Study**

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development  
Services/Tacoma Public Utilities

**Public Utility Board Study Session  
April 9, 2025**



# ● ● ● OVERVIEW



## **Presenters:**

- Dr. John Gaines, Community Relations Manager, Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU)
- Lauren Hoogkamer, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services (PDS)
- Mandi Roberts, AICP, PLA, Principal Planner, Otak

## **Presentation Overview:**

- Future Use Study: Context, Background, and Process
- Summary of Engagement Results
- Future Use Scenarios and Ongoing Analysis
- Next Steps

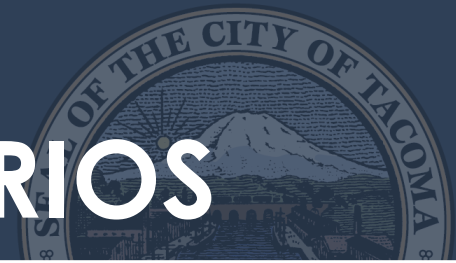
## **Questions, Answers, and Discussion**

# FUTURE USE STUDY CONTEXT



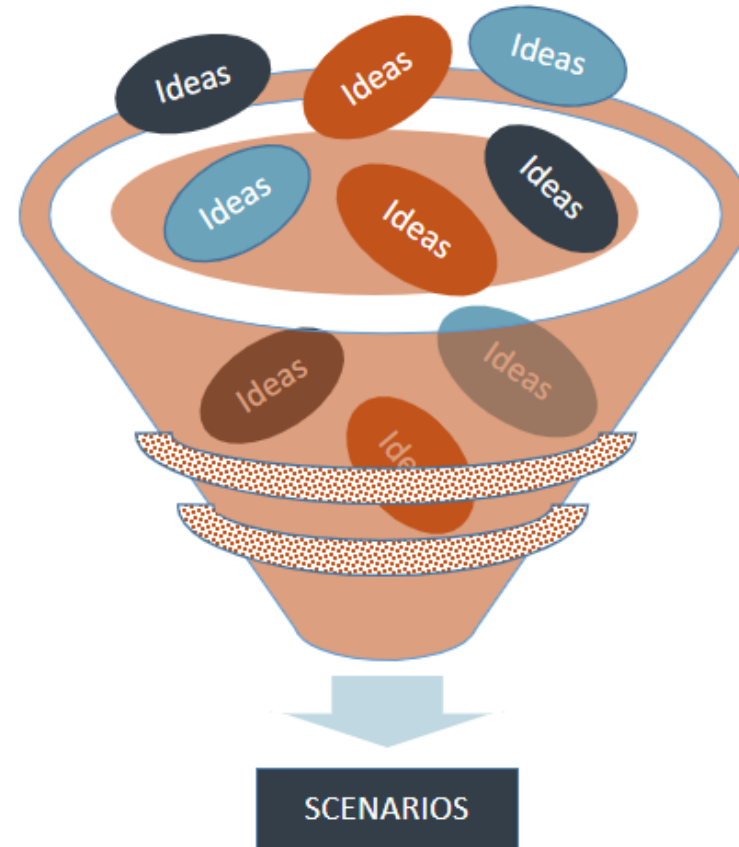
# STUDY PROCESS:

## ● ● ● FROM VISIONING TO SCENARIOS



FUTURE USE  
STUDY  
PROCESS

FROM IDEAS  
TO  
SCENARIOS



1. **VISIONING WORKSHOPS:** Ideas and opportunities generated
2. **SCENARIOS WORKSHOPS:** Scenarios shaped from ideas
3. **FILTERING:** Market analysis and technical evaluation of scenarios
4. **OUTPUTS:** Short list of future use scenarios to inform decision-making and additional feasibility analysis



# ●●● COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Input gathered by the North End Neighborhood Council** (2018 to Present)
- **Visioning Survey/Online Open House** (May to September 2024; 613 Respondents)
- **Visioning Workshop Sessions** (June 2024; Approx. 50 Participants)
- **Presence at Various Events and Farmers Markets throughout Tacoma** (Summer 2024; 100s of Attendees)
- **Discover Cushman Historic Cushman Street Fair** (September 2024; 100s of Attendees)
- **Scenarios Survey/Online Open House** (October to November 2024; 394 Responses)
- **Scenarios Workshop Sessions** (October 2024; Approx. 50 Attendees)





# SCENARIOS FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## Workshop Feedback:

- Respondents wanted both passive and active open space and open space connectivity between sites.
- Most participants acknowledged need for housing options; a range of middle housing to mixed use with residential were discussed.
- Some participants wanted ONLY public uses of the Cushman building and public/park uses.
- Sidewalks, safe crossings and traffic calming, and parking were also mentioned.

## Online Open House Feedback:

- Strong support for public open space and public building uses (70-80% across scenarios)
- 48%-60% support (across scenarios) for leased spaces in existing buildings.
- A range of support for housing options in different scenarios; support was higher for affordable housing and ground floor active uses/retail/commercial spaces.
- Not a citywide sample (88% from North End/West Tacoma); 83% homeowners

# CITY POLICIES AND CONTEXT



## Key Surplus Policies

- First right of refusal to Native American tribes
- Consider affordable housing as use

## Current Zoning

- Urban Residential 2 and Urban Residential 3 zoning
- Development Regulation Agreement (DRA) and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) potential permitting



Base Map Source: Parks Tacoma System and Strategic Plan 2024-2030

<https://metro-parks-tacoma-system-and-strategic-plan-2024-2030-mpt.hub.arcgis.com/#HeatMapping>



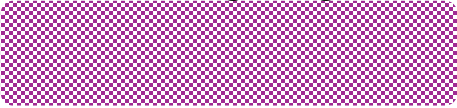


# SCENARIOS: POSSIBLE SITE USES

**Public Use in Existing Bldgs**



**Leased Space in Existing Bldgs**



**Commercial Space Existing or Future Bldgs**



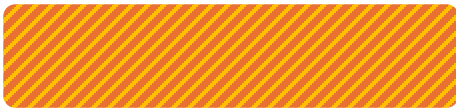
**Residential Mixed Use**



**Public Open Space Passive, Active, Multi-Use**



**UR-3 Urban Residential**



**N. Adams Street Shared Street or Vacated**



**UR-2 Urban Residential**



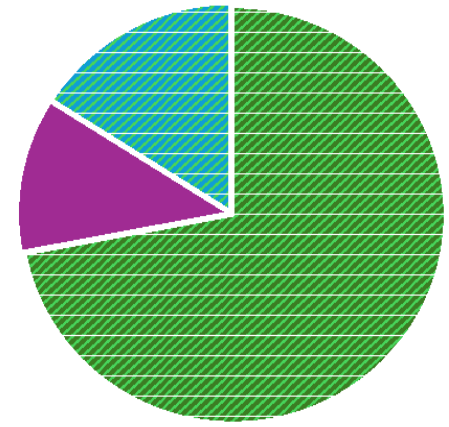




# SCENARIO A



Use Mix:







- Open Space (Active or Passive; Multi-Use)
- Public Use in Existing Buildings
- Adams Street as Shared Use/Public Use Vacated ROW



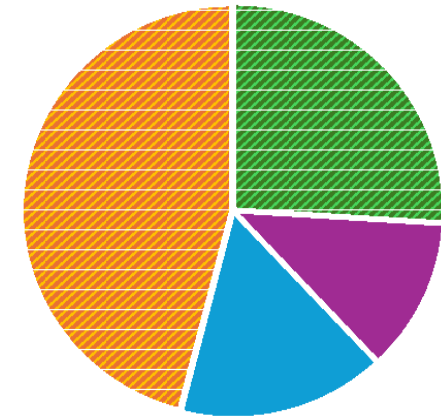
# SCENARIO B





-  Public Use in Existing Buildings
-  Adams as Shared Use Street (Not Vacated)
-  Open Space (Active, Passive, or Multi-Use)
-  UR-3 Residential



Use Mix:








-  Open Space (Active or Passive; Multi-Use)
-  Public Use in Existing Buildings
-  Adams Street Retained as Public Right-of-Way
-  UR-3 Urban Residential 3 Use





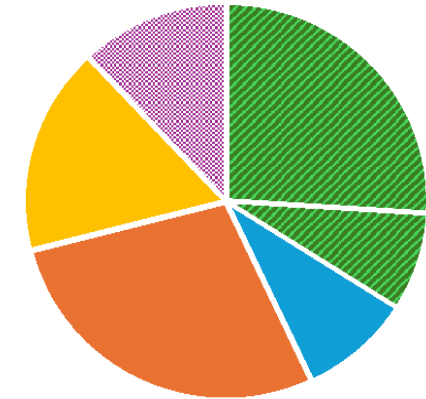
# SCENARIO C









-  Leased Space in Existing Buildings
-  Adams as Shared Use Street (Not Vacated)
-  Open Space (Active or Passive; Multi-Use)
-  UR-2 Residential
-  Residential Mixed Use



Use Mix:



-  Open Space (Active or Passive; Multi-Use)
-  Adams Street North Portion Vacated for Public Use
-  Adams Street South Portion Retained as ROW
-  Residential + Mixed Use (5 to 7 Stories)
-  UR-2 Urban Residential 2 (Low Scale to 3 Stories)
-  Leased Space in Existing Buildings

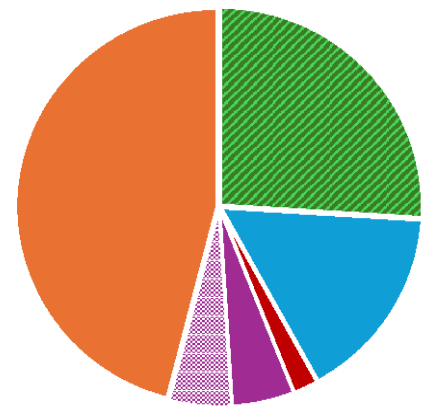








# SCENARIO D



-  Leased Space in Existing Building
-  Public Use in Building
-  Adams as Shared Use Street (Not Vacated)
-  Commercial Space
-  Open Space (Active or Passive; Multi-Use)
-  Residential Mixed Use

Use Mix:

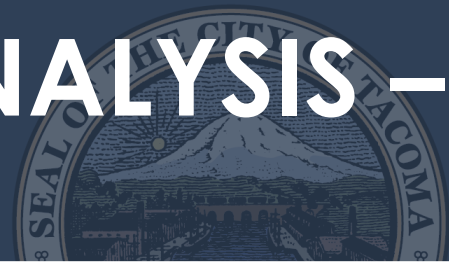


-  Open Space (Active or Passive; Multi-Use)
-  Adams Street Retained as Public Right-of-Way
-  Commercial Use in Adams Building
-  Public Use in Cushman Building
-  Leased Space in Cushman Building
-  Residential + Mixed Use (5 to 7 Stories)



# SUMMARY OF SCENARIOS ANALYSIS –

## KEY POINTS



- All scenarios have a public open space component.
- Scenario A evaluates only public use (of sites and buildings).
- Scenarios A, B, and D evaluate public use in the existing historic buildings (part or all of the square footage).
- Scenarios B, C, and D most closely align with surplus policies, One Tacoma policies, and zoning.
- Scenario D provides the greatest opportunity for affordable housing opportunities, given the scale and number of units.
- Scenarios B, C, and D all would have some mixed-use and ground floor active use along the street frontages (with D having the most); these would extend the sense of the Proctor District southward and enhance neighborhood access to shops, dining, services, etc.
- ***See draft report for case study examples from other cities.***



# SCENARIOS ANALYSIS – EVALUATION MATRIX FRAMEWORK



Evaluation Criteria:	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
Alignment with City Policies (Including Surplus)				
Alignment with City Zoning Provisions				
Community Need				
Costs				
Public Investment Costs	\$\$\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$
Private Investment Costs	0	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$
Feasibility				
Public Input				
Sustainability (Environmental and Operational)				

## ALIGNMENT WITH CRITERIA:



Least Aligned      Partially Aligned      Most Aligned

## COSTS:

\$ High  
 \$\$ Higher  
 \$\$\$ Highest

**City Council and Public Utility Board will make the final determinations**

# ● ● ● SCHEDULE



- January 2025: Landmarks Commission Briefing
- **Today: Council Briefing**
- **April 9, 2025: Public Utilities Board (PUB) Briefing**
- Final Draft of the Study
- May 2025: North End Neighborhood Council Briefing
- **May 20, 2025: Joint session with City Council/PUB** (*Decision/Direction: determine the scenario or hybrid of scenarios and next steps that should be carried forward for future analysis, planning, and design.*)
- **June 2025 TBD: City Council Resolution**
- Identify surplus path and key partners
- 2027-Beyond: Tacoma Power plans to vacate the Cushman Substation and implementation of recommended steps

# PRELIMINARY

# RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSSION



Overall, the buildings are in fair condition. Environmental remediation and restorative work on both buildings will be needed as part of any future reuse efforts. Additional work will be needed:

- Complete Building Conditions Assessment with all access provided.
- Conduct additional analysis of the buildings and sites to confirm specific remediation requirements, steps, and related costs.
- Undertake further planning, including architectural and engineering design.
- Analyze potential operational models and confirm and structure of future permitting and approval pathways. **Comments or questions about evaluation criteria and subfactor considerations? Do these sufficiently cover future potential pathways for use?**
- Financial and technical feasibility analysis. **Any additional information needed?**





# **Cushman and Adams Substations Future Use Study**

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development  
Services/Tacoma Public Utilities

**City Council Study Session  
April 1, 2025**





**SUBSTITUTE  
RESOLUTION NO. 39741**

1 BY REQUEST OF COUNCIL MEMBERS IBSEN AND McCARTHY

2 A RESOLUTION relating to historic preservation; adding the proposed landmarks  
3 to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and imposing controls for the  
4 following properties: Cushman Substation, located at 3713 North 19th  
5 Street, and Adams Street Substation, located at 1920 North Adams Street;  
6 said landmarks hereby designated by the Landmarks Preservation  
7 Commission under Chapter 13.07 of the Tacoma Municipal Code.

8 WHEREAS the Tacoma Landmarks and Historic Districts Code,  
9 Chapter 13.07 of the Tacoma Municipal Code ("TMC"), establishes a procedure for  
10 the designation and preservation of structures and areas having historical, cultural,  
11 architectural, archaeological, engineering, or geographic importance, and

12 WHEREAS, pursuant to TMC 13.07.050, the nominations of the Cushman  
13 Substation, located at 3713 North 19th Street, and Adams Street Substation,  
14 located at 1920 North Adams Street ("Properties"), were submitted by a private  
15 citizen for inclusion on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, along with the  
16 requisite application materials, and

17 WHEREAS the Cushman Substation property and transmission line were  
18 previously added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016, and

19 WHEREAS the Properties are of primary historical significance to Tacoma,  
20 are significant for their association with the region's growth as a result of  
21 hydroelectric power production, and are an excellent example of monumental,  
22 neoclassical revival style architecture, and

23 WHEREAS, as originally submitted, the nomination included the Properties  
24 substation buildings, including the interior of the Cushman Substation condenser  
25  
26



1 room, the site surrounding both buildings (but not the switchyard equipment in the  
2 Cushman yard), and the lattice transmission towers located in the center of North  
3 21st Street that run from the substations to North Highland Street, and

4 WHEREAS the Landmarks Preservation Commission ("Commission")  
5 reviewed the requests on December 14, 2016, at which time it voted to exclude the  
6 transmission towers within North 21st Street from further consideration, and

7 WHEREAS, on February 8, 2017, the Commission held a public hearing on  
8 the nomination of the remaining elements, which included one remaining lattice  
9 transmission tower located adjacent to the Adams Street Substation, to receive  
10 public comment on the historic significance of the Properties, and

11 WHEREAS, according to TMC 13.07.040, the Commission found that the  
12 Properties meet the eligibility requirements for listing on the Tacoma Register of  
13 Historic Places, and

14 WHEREAS the remaining lattice tower will create a significant technical  
15 hurdle and add additional expense to the planned North 21st Street tower and  
16 power transmission line replacement project, necessitating a rerouting of the  
17 transmission lines associated with the North 21st Street project or requiring  
18 relocation of the remaining lattice tower, and

19 WHEREAS the interior of the condenser room of the Cushman Substation  
20 has not been historically used and is not currently used as a public area or  
21 assembly space appropriate for designation as an historic landmark, and

22 WHEREAS the Adams Street Substation is not currently in active use and  
23 maintenance of that portion of the Properties has been deferred, and  
24  
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1 WHEREAS the site surrounding the Properties substation buildings may  
2 require environmental cleanup prior to any future changed use of the Properties, and

3 WHEREAS a timely redevelopment of the Properties is desirable, and

4 WHEREAS, based upon said findings, the City Council believes that it  
5 would be in the best interest of the City to designate only the portions of the  
6 Properties described below as historic landmarks and place them on the Tacoma  
7 Register of Historic Places subject to the additional stated direction related to  
8 preparation of the Properties for potential development; Now, Therefore,

9 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

10 Section 1. Designation. That, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 13.07  
11 of the Tacoma Municipal Code ("TMC"), the City Council of Tacoma approves the  
12 designation of the following properties as historic landmarks and places said  
13 properties on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places:  
14

15 **(1) Adams Street Substation**

16 More particularly described as: 1920 North Adams Street, Tacoma, WA  
17 98406

18 Parcel No.: 7475021883

19 Legal Description:

20 That portion of the Southeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of  
21 Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 02 East, W.M. more  
22 particularly described as follows:

23 The East 170 feet of the North 120 feet of Block 102, Amended  
24 Map of Second School Land Addition to the City of Tacoma as  
25 recorded in Volume 7 of Plats at Pages 78 and 79, records of  
26 Pierce County Auditor;

Situate in the City of Tacoma, County of Pierce, State of Washington;





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based upon satisfaction of the following standards of TMC 13.07.040, that the

Property:

- A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- F. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

**(2) Cushman Substation**

More particularly described as: 3713 North 19th Street, Tacoma, WA 98406

Parcel No.: 7475021970

Legal Description:

That portion of the Southeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 02 East, W.M. more particularly described as follows:

Tracts A and B, Block 103, Amended Map of Second School Land Addition to the City of Tacoma as recorded in Volume 7 of Plats at Pages 78 and 79, records of Pierce County Auditor;

Situate in the City of Tacoma, County of Pierce, State of Washington;

based upon satisfaction of the following standards of TMC 13.07.040, that the

Property:

- A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses



high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

- F. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.

Section 2. Controls. A Certificate of Approval must be obtained from the Landmarks Preservation Commission pursuant to TMC 13.05.047 et seq., or the time for denying an application for a Certificate of Approval must have expired before the owners may make alterations or changes to the following properties:

A. Cushman Substation

1. Building exterior.
2. Site on the surrounding parcel (but specifically excluding the existing electrical switchyard equipment in the Cushman yard).

B. Adams Street Substation

1. Building exterior.
2. Site on the surrounding parcel.

Section 3. Amenability to Future Development. The City Manager is directed to work with Tacoma Power in order to address the current condition of the Adams Street Substation, to maintain the interior and exterior of both of the Properties to a standard that will be attractive and amenable to future development and to evaluate the degree to which environmental cleanup of the Properties will be required.


Section 4. Timely Efforts Toward Redevelopment of the Properties. The City Manager is further directed to work with Tacoma Power and enter into Memorandum of Understanding as necessary to establish a process to encourage timely redevelopment of the Properties. The process will address elements



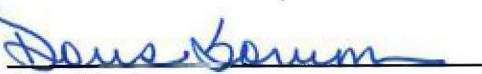
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including, but not limited to, setting a schedule that promotes the expedited relocation of the current Tacoma Power operations from the Cushman Substation; establishing a process for a prompt internal transfer of the Properties from Tacoma Public Utilities to the City of Tacoma General Government, such process to include establishing the fair market value for the Properties (less encumbrances); establishing and funding the cost for any required environmental cleanup of the Properties; allocating the risk and responsibility for any environmental liability past, present, and future, which may be included as a factor in the internal transfer sales' price; and setting out a process by which City will conduct a Request for Proposals (including community input) for future redevelopment of the Properties, and prior to issuing a Request for Proposals the City will work with community stakeholders to identify community goals for redevelopment of the Properties, which will be reconciled with costs and market constraints that could include public amenities and private redevelopment.

Adopted JUN 06 2017

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Approved as to form:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy City Attorney

Legal Description Approved:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Surveyor  
Public Works Department





**TO:** Elizabeth A. Pauli, Interim City Manager  
**FROM:** Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Services  
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution designating the Cushman and Adams Street Substations as City Landmarks  
and placing said properties on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places – June 6, 2017  
**DATE:** May 10, 2017

**SUMMARY:**

On June 6, 2017 staff will present a request for a Council Resolution to place the following property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places:

- Cushman and Adams Street Substations (3713 North 19<sup>th</sup> Street & 1920 North Adams Street)

This request follows the recommendation from the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee as well as the Landmarks Preservation Commission to include within the scope of the designation the following elements of the property:

- The Cushman Substation exterior and interior of the condenser room, as well as the surrounding site, at 3713 North 19<sup>th</sup> Street, and
- The Adams Street Substation exterior, as well as the surrounding site and a single electrical transmission tower on the site, located at 1920 North Adams Street

**STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:**

This action is best aligned with the following strategic policy priorities:

- Foster a vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents.
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Cushman and Adams Street Substations were nominated to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places by a private citizen. As originally submitted, the nomination included the substation buildings, including the interior of the Cushman Substation condenser room, the site surrounding both buildings, and the lattice transmission towers located in the center of North 21<sup>st</sup> Street that run from the substations to North Highland Street (approximately 1.5 miles to the west). The Cushman Substation property and the transmission line were previously added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.

The Cushman and Adams Street Substations are of primary historical significance to Tacoma. The complex is significant for its association with the region's growth as a result of hydroelectric power production and as an excellent example of monumental, neoclassical revival style architecture. The Cushman Substation is a visual statement as to the importance of the city's municipal hydroelectric system.

The Commission first reviewed the nomination on December 14, 2016, at which time, it voted to exclude the transmission towers within North 21<sup>st</sup> Street from further consideration. The Commission held a public hearing on the nomination of the remaining elements, which included one remaining lattice transmission tower located adjacent to the Adams Street Substation, on February 8, 2017.



The nomination received 34 individual written and oral comments during its review. All comments received were in support of the designation of the exteriors of both buildings. Of those comments, ten individuals opposed designation of the Adams Street lattice tower. Five of the comments specifically supported the designation of the interior of the Cushman Substation condenser room.

On February 22, 2017, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend designation of the Cushman and Adams Street Substations, including the surrounding sites, the lattice tower on the Adams Street Substation property, and the interior of the main condenser room. The staff recommendation excluded the interior of the condenser room.

On April 17, 2017, the Landmarks Preservation Commission was presented to the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee. The Committee voted to forward the recommendation of the commission to the full Council.

**ISSUE:**

By designating the Cushman and Adams Street Substations as City Landmarks, the buildings will be protected for future generations, as alterations will require the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. In addition, because the properties are located in an R-2 zoning designation, the Historic Conditional Use Permit could provide land use flexibility for future adaptive re-use of the facilities.

In addition, it may become eligible for other historic preservation incentives, including Special Tax Valuation, low-interest loans and Transfer of Development Rights.

However, the Landmarks Commission recommendation differs from the staff recommendation regarding the interior condenser room, which staff recommends excluding from the designating resolution based on a code interpretation and convention. Tacoma Public Utilities has also indicated that it does not support including the interior in the designation.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The recommended nominations of the Cushman and Adams Street Substations could be rejected for listing on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places by Council under TMC 13.07.050 D, which would leave these properties unprotected from inappropriate future alterations or even demolition.

The Council could also accept the recommendation to designate but in Council's designating resolution under TMC 13.07.050 D.2.c remove any individual element from the nomination, including the condenser room, the surrounding site, or the lattice tower. This action would limit the Landmarks Commission's oversight over the property to only those elements specified in the resolution.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee and the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommend the designation of the Cushman and Adams Street Substations, including:

1. The exteriors of both substation buildings
2. The interior of the "condenser room" of the Cushman Street Substation
3. The sites surrounding both buildings (not including the non-historic electrical switchyard equipment)
4. The solitary transmission tower adjacent to the Adams Substation (which would serve as a remnant of the original transmission line, and could be relocated to elsewhere on the site if needed)



Staff concurs with the above recommendation, with the exception of the interior condenser room in the Cushman Substation, which is recommended to be removed from the designating resolution.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct fiscal impact that results from designation to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. Design review can potentially increase the cost of future alterations. A property's status as a City Landmark can increase the potential for adaptive reuse due to the special Historic Conditional Use Permit process.



Resolution No. 39741 substitute

Adopted: JUN 06 2017

Maker of Motion: THOMS

Seconded: MELLO

Voice Vote:

MEMBERS	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Blocker	X			
Mr. Campbell	X			
Mr. Ibsen	X			
Mr. Lonergan	X			
Mr. McCarthy	X			
Mr. Mello	X			
Mr. Thoms	X			
Ms. Walker Lee	X			
Mayor Strickland	X			

Roll Call Vote:

MEMBERS	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Blocker				
Mr. Campbell				
Mr. Ibsen				
Mr. Lonergan				
Mr. McCarthy				
Mr. Mello				
Mr. Thoms				
Ms. Walker Lee				
Mayor Strickland				

**EVERYTHING BEHIND THIS  
PAGE IS BACKUP INFORMATION**



**RESOLUTION NO. 39741**

1 A RESOLUTION relating to historic preservation; adding the proposed landmarks  
2 to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places and imposing controls for the  
3 following properties: Cushman Street Substation, located at 3713 North 19th  
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said landmarks hereby designated by the Landmarks Preservation  
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25 WHEREAS, as originally submitted, the nomination included the  
26 Properties substation buildings, including the interior of the Cushman Substation





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2 towers located in the center of North 21st Street that run from the substations to  
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17 Places; Now, Therefore,

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23 designation of the following properties as historic landmarks and places said  
24 properties on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places:  
25  
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**(1) Adams Street Substation**

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More particularly described as: 1920 North Adams Street, Tacoma, WA 98406

Parcel No.: 7475021970

Legal Description:

That portion of the Southeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 02 East, W.M. more particularly described as follows:

The East 170 feet of the North 120 feet of Block 102, Amended Map of Second School Land Addition to the City of Tacoma as recorded in Volume 7 of Plats at Pages 78 and 79, records of Pierce County Auditor;

Situate in the City of Tacoma, County of Pierce, State of Washington;

based upon satisfaction of the following standards of TMC 13.07.040, that the Property:

- A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- F. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or City.



## (2) Cushman Street Substation

1 More particularly described as: 3713 North 19th Street, Tacoma, WA  
2 98406

3 Parcel No.: 475021883

### 4 Legal Description:

5 That portion of the Southeast quarter of the Northeast quarter  
6 of Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 02 East, W.M. more  
7 particularly described as follows:

8 Tracts A and B, Block 103, Amended Map of Second School  
9 Land Addition to the City of Tacoma as recorded in Volume 7  
of Plats at Pages 78 and 79, records of Pierce County Auditor;

10 Situate in the City of Tacoma, County of Pierce, State of  
11 Washington;

12 based upon satisfaction of the following standards of TMC 13.07.040, that the

13 Property:

- 14 A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution  
15 to the broad patterns of our history;
- 16 C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method  
17 of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses  
18 high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable  
entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- 19 F. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics,  
20 represents an established and familiar visual feature of the  
neighborhood or City.

21 Section 2. Controls. A Certificate of Approval must be obtained from the  
22 Landmarks Preservation Commission pursuant to TMC 13.05.047 et seq., or the  
23 time for denying an application for a Certificate of Approval must have expired  
24 before the owners may make alterations or changes to the following properties:  
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A. Cushman Substation

1. Building exterior.
2. Interior of the condenser room.
3. Site on the surrounding parcel (but specifically excluding the existing electrical equipment in the Cushman yard).

B. Adams Substation

1. Building exterior.
2. Site on the surrounding parcel.
3. "Potlatch Tower #1" located in the northeast corner of the parcel (noting that the tower may be relocated to elsewhere on the property for logistical reasons to a location approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission).

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Approved as to form:

*Martina P. Lawton*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy City Attorney

Legal Description Approved:

*[Signature]*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Surveyor  
Public Works Department

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
CITY OF TACOMA'S  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**AND**

**CITY OF TACOMA,  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES,  
LIGHT DIVISION**

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (“MOU”)** is entered into by and between the Department of Public Utilities Light Division (“Tacoma Power” or “TPU”) and the City of Tacoma's general government (“GG”). Each of Tacoma Power and the City of Tacoma's general government are sometimes referred to herein individually as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties."

**WHEREAS**, the Tacoma City Council enacted Substitute Resolution 39741 on June 6, 2017, which added the exteriors of the following properties to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places: Cushman Substation, located at 3713 North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and adjacent Adams Street Substation, located at 1920 North Adams Street (collectively, the "Properties"); and

**WHEREAS**, the Cushman substation property and transmission line were previously added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016, and

**WHEREAS**, the Properties are of primary historical significance to Tacoma, are significant for their association with the region's growth as a result of hydroelectric power production, and are an excellent example of monumental, neoclassical revival style architecture; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018 Tacoma Power completed the North 21<sup>st</sup> Street Transmission Line Project, which replaced aging lattice towers originally part of the Potlatch Transmission Line with steel poles and ultimately resulted in the decommissioning of the Cushman substation as an active power substation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cushman Street Substation continues to serve several other purposes for Tacoma Power's customers, including housing a 50-ton capacity crane that

is used for heavy equipment repair, large equipment storage, and other uses, and is not currently surplus to utility operations; and

**WHEREAS**, the adjacent Adams Street Substation was previously determined to be surplus to utility operations by Public Utility Board Resolution No. U-10270 and Tacoma City Council Resolution No. 37730 enacted on January 28, 2009, and February 10, 2009, respectively; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition, City Council Substitute Resolution No. 39741 directs the City's general government and Tacoma Power to work collaboratively to plan and provide for disposition of the Cushman Substation, including winding down of Tacoma Power operations on the site, environmental assessment and remediation, and contemplates a lead role for general government in the future redevelopment of the Cushman and Adams Street Substations; and

**WHEREAS**, under Resolution 39741, it is further contemplated that the City's general government and Tacoma Power will enter into a memorandum of understanding addressing matters to include an orderly winding down of utility operations at Cushman Street Substation, a process for assessment and remediation of any environmental issues, internal transfer of the substation premises to the City's general government or sale to a third party when determined to be surplus to the utility, and community outreach and input in planning future redevelopment of both the Cushman and Adams Street Substations, and

**WHEREAS**, the City's general government and Tacoma Power have established a joint staff task force that developed and amended this MOU to meet the objectives of Resolution 39741, and which will continue to meet periodically as the contact group to ensure the Parties' respective and collective obligations under this MOU are timely and reasonably fulfilled, and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is hereby agreed as follows:

1. Tacoma Power has identified cost-effective options to replace the storage and crane capabilities that Cushman Substation now provides to Tacoma Power's customers, as well as reviewing the storage inventory for a reduction in items that will need to be relocated. This work is underway, and Tacoma Power's goal is to have replacement facilities and capabilities operations in calendar year of 2027, rendering the Cushman Substation surplus to the utility. The schedule for the surplus, internal transfer, or third-party sale of the property will be adjusted to reflect the appropriate lead time to allow for remediation activities determined necessary resulting from community outreach and internal decision making.

2. Prior to any transfer or sale, Tacoma Power will maintain the interior and exterior of both properties to a standard that is consistent with its utility operations, and



has fulfilled its obligations under the 2017 MOA among the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, and Tacoma Power.

3. Environmental Site Assessment (“ESA”) was completed of Adams Substation in 2008 and Cushman Substation in 2018, fully characterizing environmental impacts, encompassing potential contamination from the Asarco Smelter plume. Each ESA report includes remedial cleanup options, complete with recommended timelines and estimated costs for implementation. Prior to any transfer, Tacoma Power will determine the acceptable remedial clean-up level based on planned future use of the site, results of Community outreach efforts, and input from the City of Tacoma's general government. In the event of some level of remedial clean-up, TPU will be responsible for managing any remedial clean-up activity of the site funded by Tacoma Power. Tacoma Power will be financially responsible for any remediation clean-up activity completed prior to transfer that is needed to reach acceptable cleanup levels. The Parties will work cooperatively and collaboratively to allocate detailed financial and operational responsibility for any required cleanup fully and to determine the fair market value of the Cushman and Adams properties, including an independent appraisal. The parties acknowledge that any potential future internal transfer or third-party sale depends on the negotiation of an agreement setting the terms of transfer, including consideration, as well as future decisions of the Public Utility Board and City Council.

4. The City of Tacoma's general government will be the lead for scoping, scheduling, and conducting the community outreach process regarding the future redevelopment of the properties, as well as solicitation of redevelopment proposals. The community outreach process will serve as an initial phase of a master planning process. It should ensure broad community involvement and identify community goals for the redevelopment of the Properties, which will be reconciled with costs and market constraints, including public amenities and private development. In order to generate data necessary to allow Tacoma Power to appropriately scope the level and extent of any necessary environmental cleanup of the properties, Tacoma Power will fund 50% of the outside consultant work for the public outreach up to a maximum total contribution of \$57,867.00, and community outreach may occur with or without a transfer of the properties from Tacoma Power to the City's general government as the Parties deem most efficient. The community outreach/initial master planning phase should begin Q2-2024.

5. The Parties agree that the intended completion dates for the tasks identified herein are subject to extension for unforeseeable or uncontrollable circumstances, but the Parties remain committed to accomplishing them in a timely and efficient manner.

6. The joint staff task force will periodically report through the Director of Utilities to the Public Utility Board and the City Manager to the Tacoma City Council regarding the status of the work undertaken by the Parties in this MOU.

DATED this 12th day of March, 2024.

**The City of Tacoma,  
through its General Government**



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Printed Name: Elizabeth Pauli

Its: City Manager

**The City of Tacoma,  
Department of Public Utilities, Light Division**



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Printed Name: Jackie Flowers

Its: Director of Utilities



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**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager  
Jackie Flowers, Director, Tacoma Public Utilities

**FROM:** Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services   
Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services  
Dr. John Gaines, Community Relations Manager, Tacoma Public Utilities  
Lauren Hoogkamer, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services

**SUBJECT:** Cushman-Adams Future Use Study

**DATE:** March 25, 2025

At the study session on April 1, 2025, Planning and Development Services staff, representatives from OTAK Consulting, and Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) staff, will present a partial draft report for the Cushman and Adams Substations Future Use Study for feedback from the City Council before the report is finalized. Staff will provide an overview of the community engagement process, including workshops and outreach events held in the Summer and Fall of 2024. They will also review the proposed resulting redevelopment scenarios for the Cushman and Adams Substation sites and possibilities for next steps. At the May 20 joint study session, staff will present the final report for City Council and the Public Utility Board to provide direction on next steps for the project.

#### **PROJECT DETAILS:**

In 2018, the City Council directed staff to engage the community on the future redevelopment of the historic Cushman and Adams Substation sites. These efforts were paused in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed with citywide outreach in 2024. The redevelopment study aimed to gather input on potential future uses for these historic sites, which have been integral parts of the city's electric infrastructure since the 1920s.

TPU continues to operate the Cushman Substation and plans to vacate the site by 2027 once a new off-site facility is completed.

#### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

1. **Community Engagement:** Extensive public input was gathered through workshops and events.
2. **Potential Redevelopment Scenarios:** Various future use scenarios for the Cushman and Adams Substations will be reviewed.
3. **Next Policy Step:** Seeking guidance from the City Council and Public Utility Board on how to move forward with the redevelopment process and next steps.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Cushman Substation and Adams Substation are important historical assets in Tacoma, built in the 1920s as part of the city's power infrastructure. In 2017, they were placed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places. In 2018, the City began the planning process for their future, which includes considering adaptive reuse opportunities that could serve the broader community while honoring their historic significance.

Staff have provided regular updates to the City Council and TPU throughout the engagement process and now seek input on the draft report before finalizing.





For more information about the project, please contact Lauren Hoogkamer or John Gaines at (253) 591-5254 or [LHoogkamer@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:LHoogkamer@cityoftacoma.org), or (253) 260-0065 or [jgaines1@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:jgaines1@cityoftacoma.org).

For more information visit: [www.cityoftacoma.org/Cushman](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/Cushman)