

# TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY EASTSIDE & HILLTOP FEASIBILITY STUDY

Appendices | September 2022



FEHR PEERS SHKS ARCHITECTS

Susan Kent Consulting

## Tacoma City Council

- Mayor Victoria Woodards
- John Hines, Position 1
- Sarah Rumbaugh, Position 2\*
- Keith Blocker, Position 3\*
- Catherine Ushka, Position 4\*
- Joe Bushnell, Position 5
- Kiara Daniels, Position 6
- Olgy Diaz, Position 7
- Kristina Walker, Position 8\*

\* Member of the Community Vitality and Safety Committee.

## Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees

- Sara Irish, President
- Donna LaFrance, Vice President
- Andrea Cobb, Trustee
- Theresa Pan Hosley, Trustee

## Project Advisory Committee

- Kate Larsen, Director
- Amita Lonial, Assistant Director
- Sam Benscoter, Library Finance Manager and Liaison to TPL Foundation
- Mariesa Bus, Library Public Information Officer
- Rodney Croston, Human Resources Manager
- Phil Torgerson, Facility Manager
- Tasha Ware, Executive Assistant and Policy Analyst

## Project Steering Committee

- Lisa Bitney, Tacoma Public Library, Neighborhood Services Manager, Main library
- Yazmin Carretero, Executive Director, Cielo Centro and TPL Foundation Board of Trustees
- Kenny Coble, City of Tacoma, Media and Communications Office, Community Outreach Coordinator
- Jeff Dade, Forterra, Community Development Director
- Hayley Falk, City of Tacoma, Office of Management and Budget, Lead Management and Budget Analyst
- Gabby Fuentes, Tacoma Public Library, Neighborhood Services Manager, Moore Library
- Jamie Gilmore, Tacoma Public Library, Outreach Librarian
- Clarissa Gines, City of Tacoma, Tacoma Creates Program Coordinator
- Sara Irish, Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees, President
- Alisa O'Hanlon Regala, MetroParks Tacoma, Strategic Planning Coordinator
- Linda Oliver, Hilltop Library Planning Committee
- Debbie Ranniger, Community Member and Former Tacoma Public Library Foundation Board of Trustee
- Ted Richardson, City of Tacoma, Council Liaison
- Roberta Schur, Tacoma Housing Authority, Project Manager
- Alyssa Torrez, Tacoma Housing Authority Community Engagement Manager and Hilltop Action Coalition Member
- Dylan Tran, Eastside Community Member, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation Intern
- Leena Vo, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Program Manager for Business and Community Engagement Services
- Raeshawna Ware, City of Tacoma, Office of Equity and Human Rights, Senior Policy Analyst
- Carol Wolfe, City of Tacoma, Community Economic Development, Supervisor



STRATEGY ■ ANALYSIS ■ COMMUNICATIONS

2200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1000  
Seattle, Washington 98121  
P (206) 324-8760  
[www.berkconsulting.com](http://www.berkconsulting.com)

*"Helping Communities and Organizations Create Their Best Futures"*

Founded in 1988, we are an interdisciplinary strategy and analysis firm providing integrated, creative and analytically rigorous approaches to complex policy and planning decisions. Our team of strategic planners, policy and financial analysts, economists, cartographers, information designers and facilitators work together to bring new ideas, clarity, and robust frameworks to the development of analytically-based and action-oriented plans.

## PROJECT TEAM

Brian Murphy · Project Manager  
Vivien Savath · Engagement Lead  
Jason Hennessy · Analyst

Jonathan Morales · Analyst  
Ben Silver · Analyst  
Julia Tesch · Analyst

## Our Partners:



- Michael Adamson, EIT, Transportation Analyst

## SHKS ARCHITECTS

- David Strauss, Ph.D., AIA, LEED AP, Design Lead
- Carolyn LeCompte, AIA, Design Support

## S. R. Kent, LLC

- Susan Kent, Library Expert

Cover photo credit: Stephen Bentsen

This Appendix contains the following two sections:

A. Baseline Situation Assessment

B. Community Engagement Summary

# Tacoma Public Library

**Eastside and Hilltop Feasibility Study | Baseline Situation Assessment September 2022**

---

# Purpose

The City of Tacoma and the Tacoma Public Library (TPL) seek to restore library services to the Eastside and Hilltop communities appropriate to current and future community needs and desires. This document provides an analytic basis for the Eastside and Hilltop Feasibility Study, informing the work of City and Library staff, members of the Project Advisory Committee, community members, the consulting team, and other interested parties. *The bulk of the analytic and summary work reflected in this document was conducted in 2021 to inform the Feasibility Study planning process and has not been updated since that time.*

# Contents

**Civic Context ..... 1**

    One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan..... 1

    Tacoma 2025 Citywide Strategic Plan and Vision ..... 1

    2019-2020 Community Survey..... 2

    Tacoma Equity and Empowerment Framework ..... 3

    Tacoma Equity Index..... 4

    Neighborhood Council Program..... 6

    Links to Opportunity & Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension..... 6

**Eastside and Hilltop Community Context..... 7**

    Population and Population Growth..... 9

    Age ..... 15

    Housing..... 15

    Race and Ethnicity..... 16

    Language Spoken..... 17

    Income ..... 18

    Employment and Unemployment Rates..... 19

    Adult Educational Attainment..... 21

    Population with Disabilities ..... 21

    Digital Access..... 22

    Built Environment..... 24

    Transportation Infrastructure..... 25

        Roadways and Parking..... 25

        Pedestrian Network ..... 26

        Bicycle Network ..... 28

        Transit ..... 30

Transportation Conditions Summary .....	33
<b>Existing Library Services and Uses.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Tacoma Public Strategic Plan 2020-2025 .....	34
Overview of the Tacoma Public Library System.....	36
Main, Mottet, and Moore .....	40
The Main Library .....	40
Mottet Branch.....	45
Moore Branch.....	46
Library Access and Usage During the Pandemic.....	47
<b>Financial Context .....</b>	<b>48</b>
City of Tacoma .....	48
Tacoma Public Library Funding.....	49
Peer Library Benchmarking .....	51

# Civic Context

This section summarizes existing Tacoma plans and policies that are relevant to this study.

## One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

The [One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan](#) is the City of Tacoma's guiding document on community development efforts and long-range planning perspectives on topics that address the physical, social, and economic health of the City. The Plan guides key decisions on issues relating to land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, parks, and the environment.

The Capital Facilities Element establishes a Level of Service (LOS) standard for libraries of 60 square feet per 1,000 circulation. The Element provides an overview of 2015-2020 Library Capital Projects and funding sources and highlights the closures of the MLK Library Branch and Swan Creek library.

One Tacoma builds on the Core Values and Priorities expressed in the Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan. The Plan is separated into two books (Book 1: Core Policy Elements and Book 2: Implementation Programs and Strategies). There are twelve Elements and seven Implementation Programs and Strategies, including the 2014 [Hilltop Subarea Plan](#).

## Tacoma 2025 Citywide Strategic Plan and Vision

The [Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan](#), adopted by Council in 2015, represents Tacoma's community vision for the future, and is guided by four Core Values: Opportunity, Equity, Partnerships, and Accountability. The Vision for Tacoma's Future is also referenced in the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan:

*Tacoma is one of the nation's healthiest, safest, and most playful cities. We have daily access to stunning natural surroundings and great quality of life. We are Washington's most diverse big city, with arts, culture, parks, and recreational opportunities that are envied by much larger cities. We recognize how lucky we are, but we know we can make it better.*

The Plan identifies seven Focus Areas, which address challenges and opportunities in Tacoma:

- **Health and Safety.** A safe City with healthy residents.
- **Human and Social Needs.** All Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- **Economic Vibrancy and Employment.** A vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents.
- **Education and Learning.** Thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning.
- **Arts and Cultural Vitality.** A vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community.
- **Natural and Built Environment.** Outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.
- **Government Performance.** Efficient and effective government, guided by engaged residents.

The Tacoma Public Library is identified as a "City Champion" and Key Partner in Chapter 4: Education and Learning. TPL is also identified as a Key Partner in Chapter 5: Arts & Cultural Vitality.



Following adoption of the Strategic Plan, community priorities were synthesized by the Tacoma 2025 Advisory Committee into five Key Focus Areas:

- **Livability.** Tacoma residents have opportunities and amenities such as connected neighborhoods, accessible and efficient transportation options, and vibrant arts and culture while maintaining affordability.
- **Economy/Workforce.** Tacoma residents can find livable wage jobs in key industry areas. Tacoma will be a place of choice for employers, professionals, and new graduates.
- **Education.** Tacoma leads the region in education for youth and adults by producing more graduates from high school and college, linking residents to employment in the region, and investing in lifelong learning opportunities.
- **Civic Engagement.** Tacoma residents are engaged participants in making Tacoma a well-run city. Elected and volunteer leadership of the city reflects the diversity of the city and residents fully participate in community decision making.
- **Equity and Accessibility.** All residents are treated equitably and have access to services, facilities, and financial stability.

Several subsequent planning efforts have built on the Focus Areas, including the Environmental Services Strategic Plan (2018-2025), and City of Tacoma's Affordable Housing Action Strategy. During the 2019-2020 Biennial Budget process, each department referenced the Strategic Plan to some extent.

## 2019-2020 Community Survey

The City of Tacoma conducted a Community Survey between November 2019 through December 31, 2019, which reached 750 respondents across all Councilmanic districts.

*[Respondents] had the opportunity to identify which services and issues they feel are important, which service areas have improved over time, and which service areas could improve in the future. The community survey, administered by MDB Insight, assessed the City's performance in its major service areas and helped the City better understand community members' perceptions of these service areas and other community concerns. The survey findings will help define the community's current priorities and aid the City's ongoing planning and improvement processes.<sup>1</sup>*

According to [survey results](#), 91% of respondents citywide were "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with Public Library Services, while 5% were "somewhat dissatisfied" and 4% were "very dissatisfied". A Councilmanic Profile contains distributions by council district. Results are shown as either "significantly higher than the population average," or "significantly lower than the population average."

As shown in Exhibit 1, portions of Eastside and Hilltop (Districts 3, 4, and 5) show satisfaction with Public Library Services as "significantly lower than the population average," as represented by the orange fill. Results are shown as either "significantly higher than the population average," or "significantly lower than the population average."

---

<sup>1</sup> Community Survey, City of Tacoma. [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/community\\_survey](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/community_survey)



## Exhibit 1. Councilmanic Profile, 2019-2020 Community Survey

Other Municipal Services - Very/Somewhat satisfied	Total	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Public Transit Services	72%	69%	69%	65%	77%	79%
Public Library Services	91%	92%	99%	90%	87%	85%
Economic and Business Development Activities	70%	74%	65%	54%	84%	70%
Permitting Services	72%	57%	83%	63%	86%	70%
Overall Customer Service at the City of Tacoma	87%	92%	95%	74%	79%	95%

Source: City of Tacoma – 2019-2020 Community Survey, 2020; BERK, 2021

Based on overall survey results, Public Library Services were ranked as Low Priority for improvement, according to the following methodology:

*Understanding what is important to community members and where satisfaction is lowest is a statistical process that uses specific survey questions, such as satisfaction with overall municipal services, and compares them statistically to how people believe the City is performing in specific City services. The result is a list of key performance indicators that demonstrate areas of priority where the City is most likely to have a positive impact on community satisfaction levels once improvements are made. The statistical test breaks lists of services into high, moderate, and low-level priorities based on where indicators fall within the overall ranking.<sup>2</sup>*

As of the development of this Baseline Situation Assessment, the City of Tacoma is in the process of conducting a 2021-2022 Community Survey, which is anticipated to reach 750 households between November 2021 through December 2021.

## Tacoma Equity and Empowerment Framework

The [Equity and Empowerment Framework](#) was adopted by City Council in 2014, and includes five Goals which guides all efforts throughout the City of Tacoma and Office of Equity and Human Rights:

1. The City of Tacoma Workforce Reflects the Community it Serves.
2. Purposeful Community Outreach and Engagement.
3. Equitable Service Delivery to Residents and Visitors.
4. Support Human Rights and Opportunities for Everyone to Achieve their Full Potential.
5. Commitment to Equity in Policy Decision Making.

<sup>2</sup> Community Survey, City of Tacoma. [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/community\\_survey](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/community_survey)

# Tacoma Equity Index

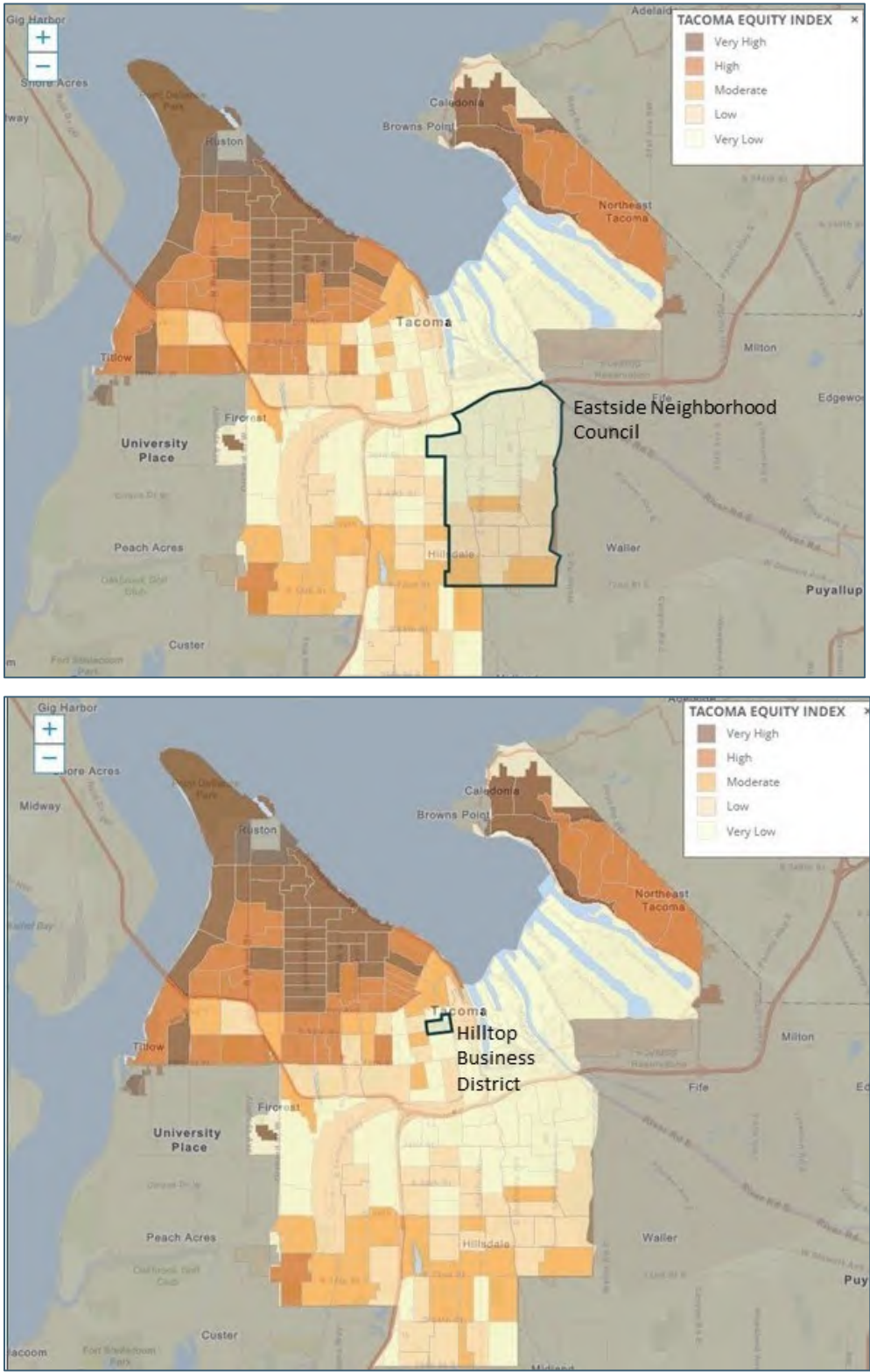
The [Equity Index](#) is a tool used by City staff and other relevant stakeholders who work with Tacoma communities. The Equity Index provides data for the City of Tacoma, and Pierce County overall focused on key indicators related to equity.

The Index uses 29 data points sorted into five categories that identify where community members are not able to access services, or where services may be provided but do not meet community needs. The five determinant categories are as follows. The starred characteristics (\*) indicate those that help to determine an equity index score:

- Accessibility.\*
- Economy.\*
- Education.\*
- Environmental Health.
- Livability.\*

The tool supports filtering by the “Eastside Neighborhood Council” and “Hilltop Business District,” both of which receive a “Very Low” overall Equity Index score, as shown in Exhibit 2.

**Exhibit 2. Equity Index Mapping for “Eastside Neighborhood Council” and “Hilltop Business District”**



Source: City of Tacoma – Equity Index, 2021; BERK, 2021

## Neighborhood Council Program

The City of Tacoma [Neighborhood Council Program](#) engages neighbors on issues and concerns that directly affect them, help craft solutions to mutual problems, and build a sense of pride and personal responsibility for their neighborhoods. [Tacoma Municipal Code Ch. 1.45](#) establishes the program and defines administrative responsibilities and expectations of the Councils.

The Hilltop neighborhood is served by the **New Tacoma Neighborhood Council** and **Central Tacoma Neighborhood Council**. The Eastside neighborhood is served by the **Eastside Neighborhood Council**.

## Links to Opportunity & Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension

[Links to Opportunity](#) is a City-led engagement initiative that began in 2016 to get community members involved in designing streetscape improvements along the [Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension](#) route being implemented by Sound Transit. A Hilltop Engagement Committee (HEC) was established by City Council to provide guidance and input on project goals and deliverables. Much of the work was aligned with Tacoma 2025, the Equity and Empowerment Initiative, Hilltop and North Downtown Subarea Plans, Transportation Master Plan, and Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The HEC was convened between 2016 through 2018.

The City worked with Downtown on the Go, Sound Outreach/Hilltop Action Coalition, and Tacoma Housing Authority to engage in grassroots outreach efforts with the Hilltop community. Construction on the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension project was originally set to begin in Fall 2021; it is currently set to open in 2022.

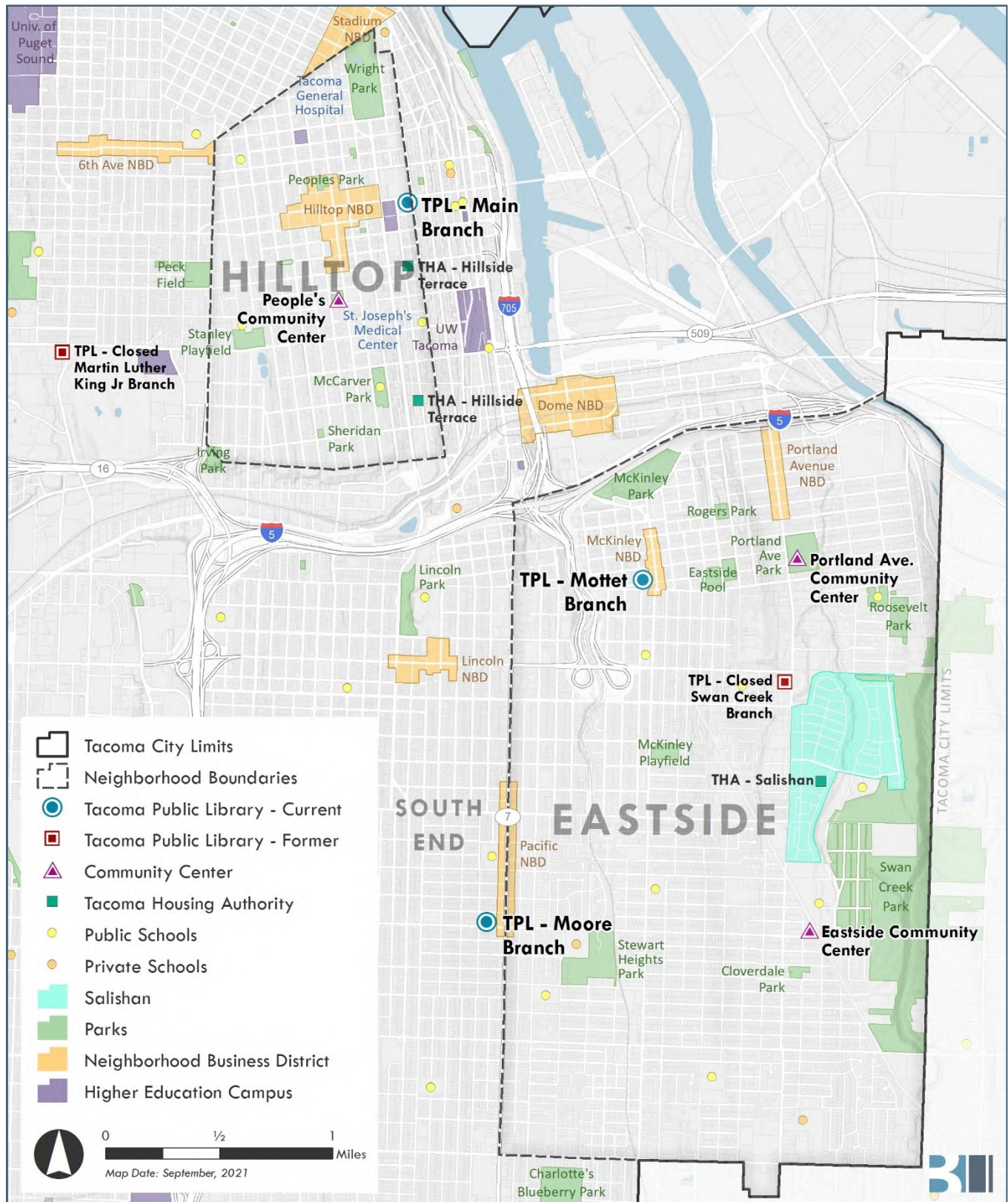
# Eastside and Hilltop Community Context

This section uses publicly available data from the U.S. Census and other sources to describe the demographics of the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. In addition to presenting data at the neighborhood-level for Eastside and Hilltop, data is presented for the City of Tacoma and Pierce County to provide regional context for the neighborhood-level data.

The neighborhood boundaries are presented in Exhibit 3 based on a mix of publicly available information and input from TPL staff. These boundaries serve the purpose of setting a baseline community context through various demographic summaries.



### Exhibit 3. Neighborhood Boundary Map



Sources: BERK, 2021.

## Population and Population Growth

In 2021, there were 32,815 in the Eastside neighborhood and 15,048 people in the Hilltop neighborhood. Since 2010, both Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods have been growing at a steady pace, with Eastside growing at a slightly faster pace than both Hilltop and Tacoma overall. Both neighborhoods are growing in population at a slower pace than Pierce County overall.

**Exhibit 4. Population, 2010-2021**

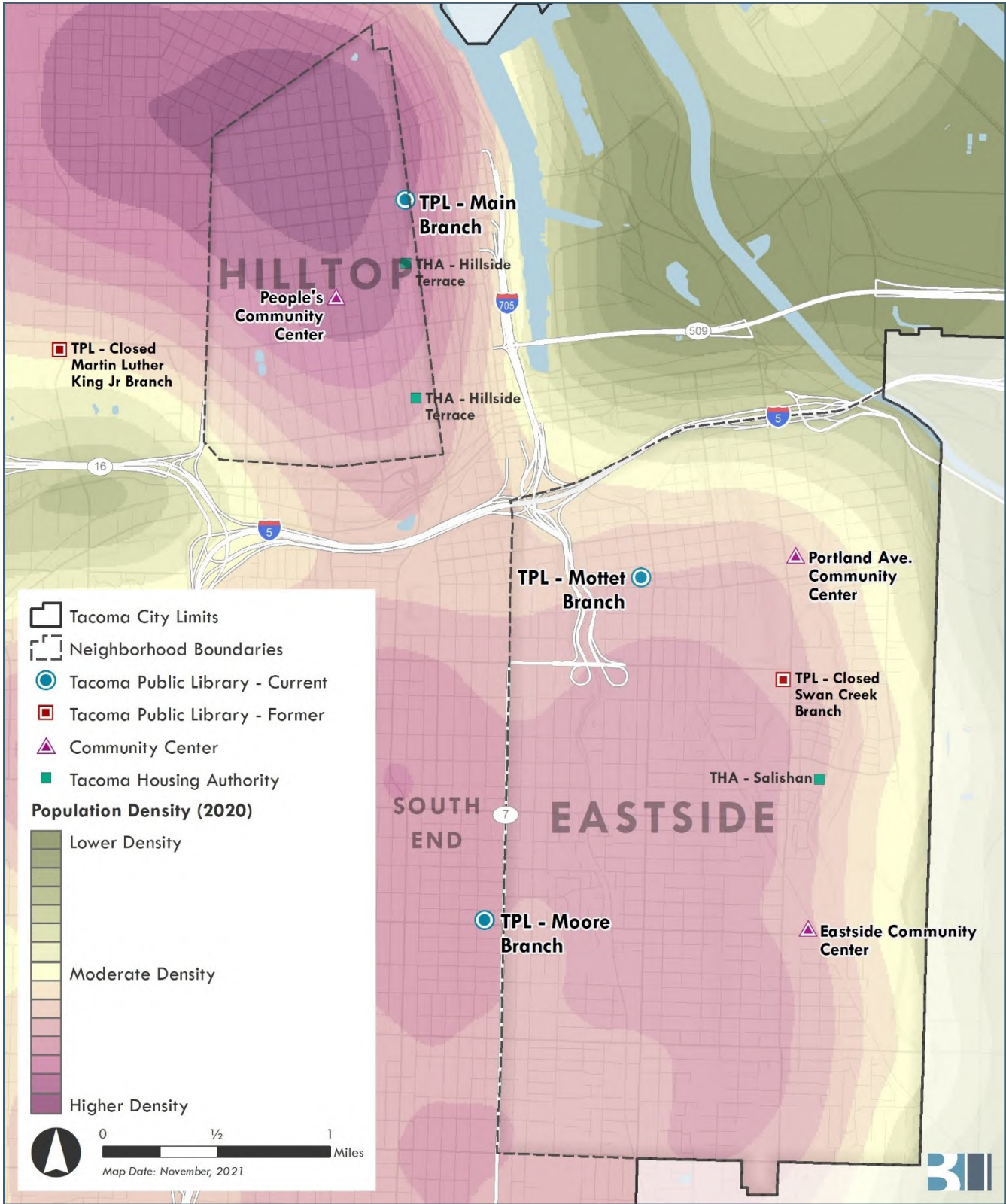
Geography	2010 Population	2021 Population	2010-2021 Compound Annual Growth Rate
Hilltop	13,829	15,048	0.85%
Eastside	28,896	32,815	1.28%
Tacoma	198,520	220,507	1.06%
Pierce County	796,518	920,335	1.46%

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

- Exhibit 5 shows a map of population density in the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. Hilltop has some of the highest population density in Tacoma, while Eastside has lower population density.
- Exhibit 6 shows Eastside population in 2019 and Exhibit 7 illustrates projected population in 2045 with greater growth occurring around the Mottet branch, west of the Portland Avenue Community Center, west of Salishan, and between 64th and 72nd Streets.
- Exhibit 8 shows Hilltop population in 2019 and Exhibit 9 illustrates projected population in 2045. Growth is anticipated around the core business district, as well as in areas straddling the boundary with Downtown to the east.

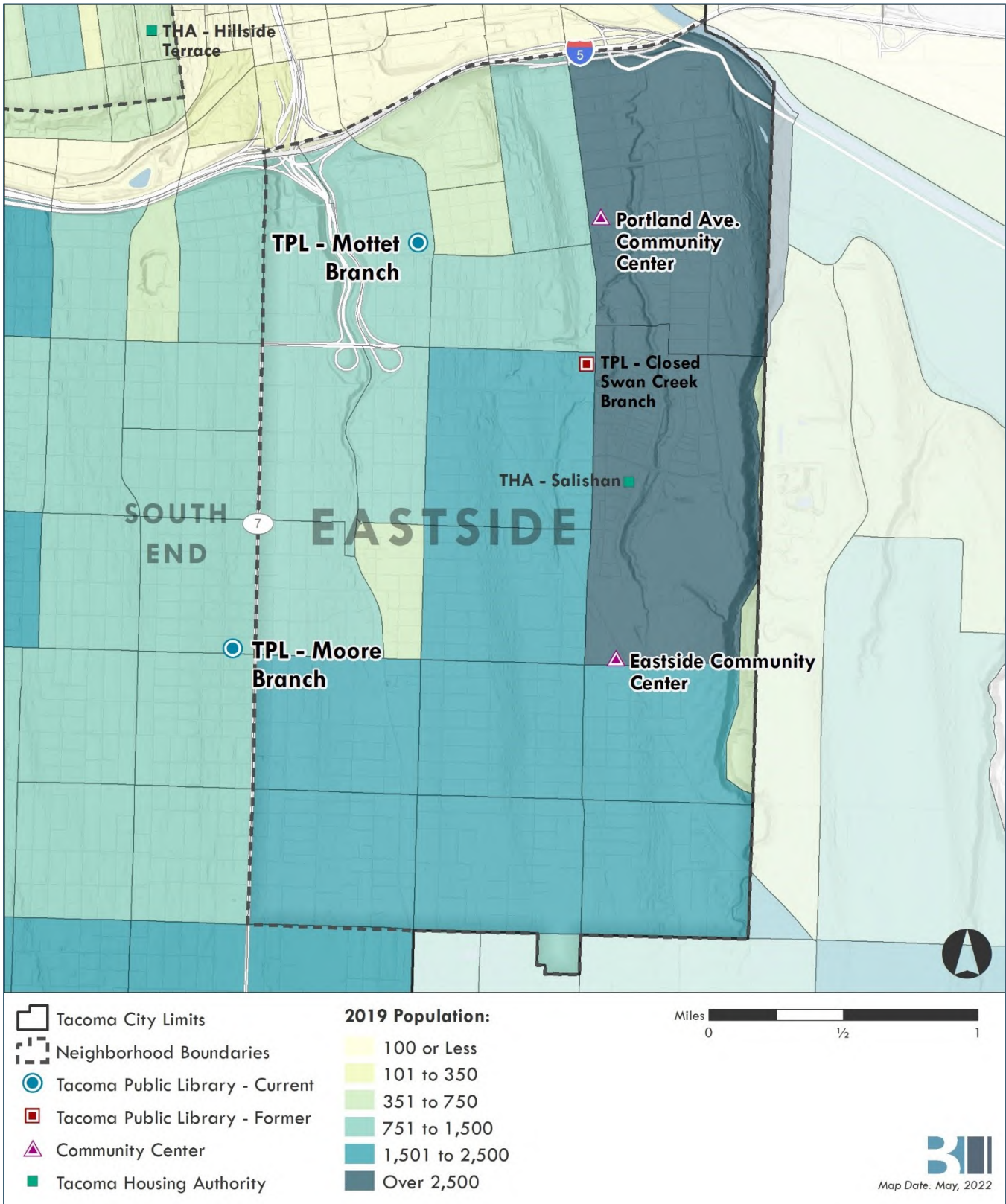


Exhibit 5. Population Density, 2020



Sources: WA Office of Financial Management, 2020; BERK, 2021

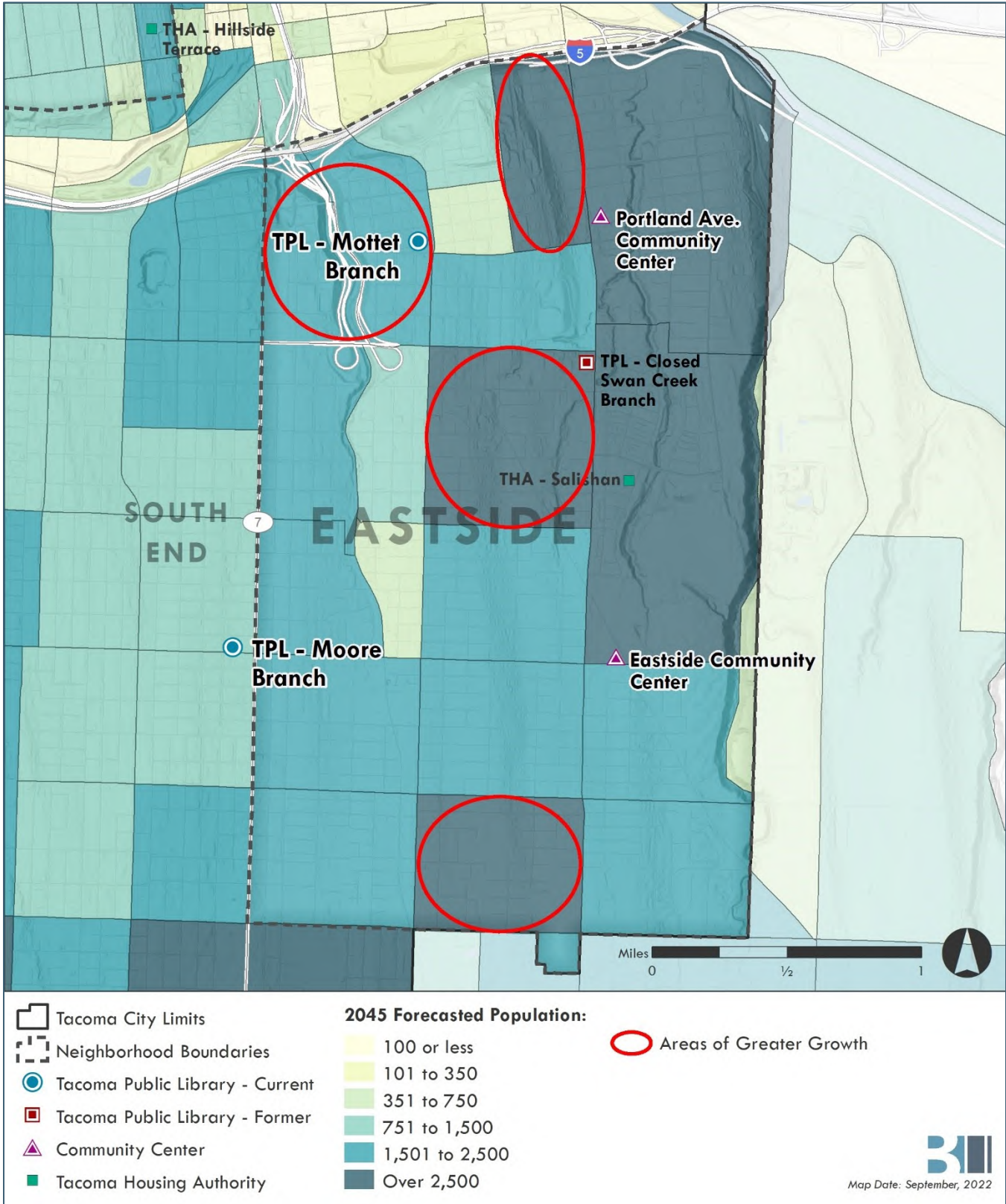
Exhibit 6. Eastside Population, 2019



Source: BERK, 2022 (based on PSRC Land Use Vision).

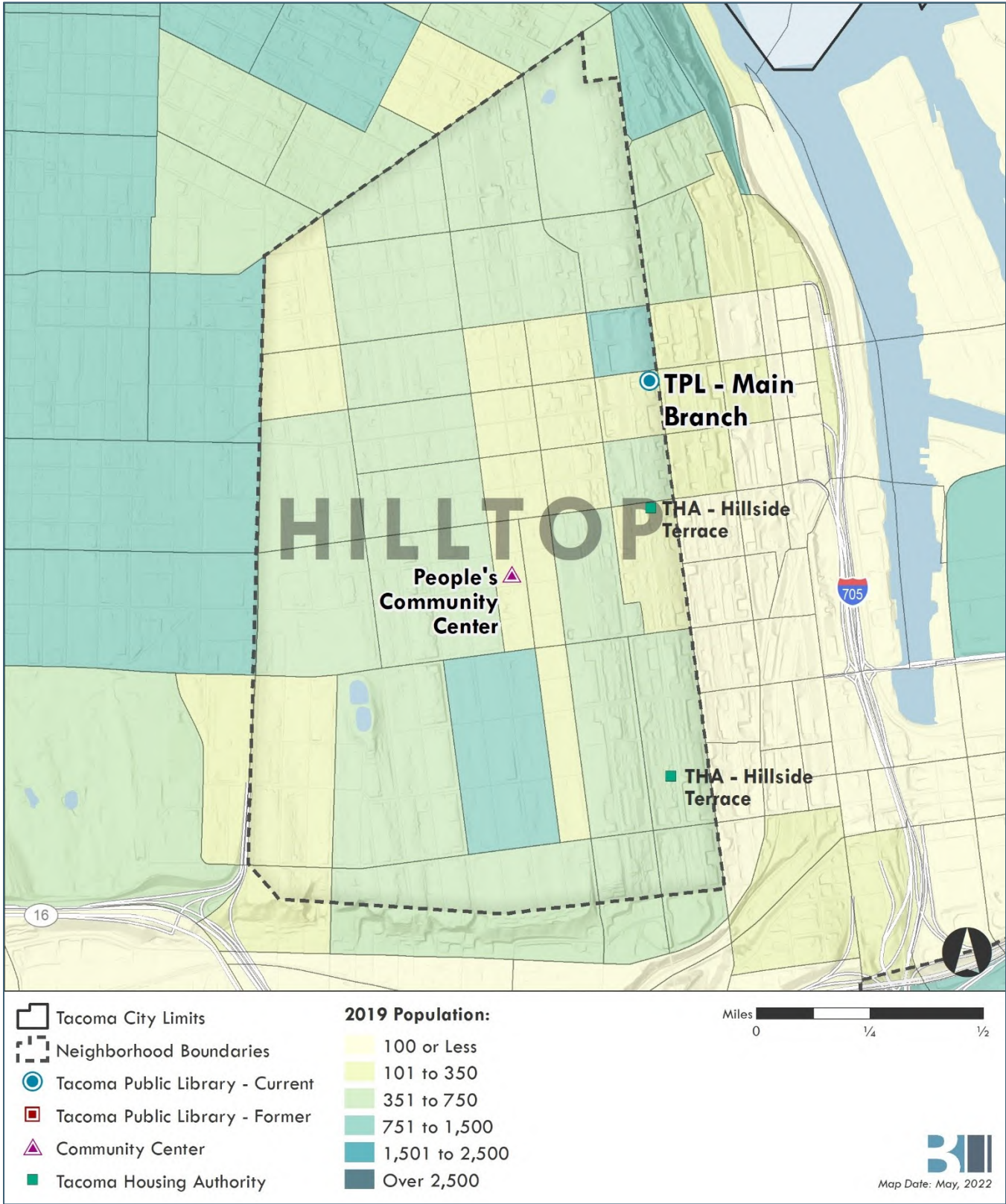


Exhibit 7. Eastside Population, 2045



Source: BERK, 2022 (based on PSRC Land Use Vision).

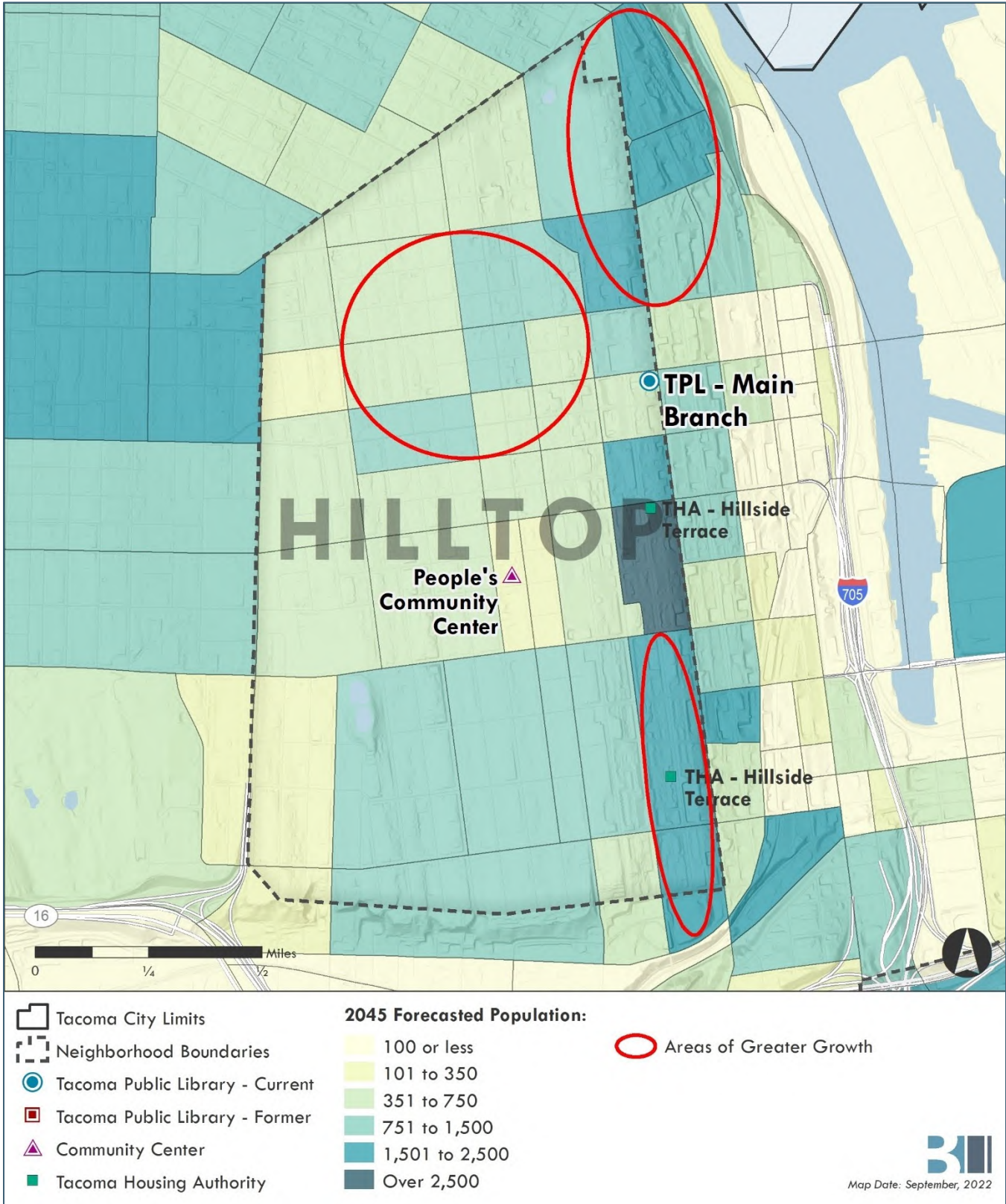
Exhibit 8. Hilltop Population, 2019



Source: BERK, 2022 (based on PSRC Land Use Vision).



Exhibit 9. Hilltop Population, 2045

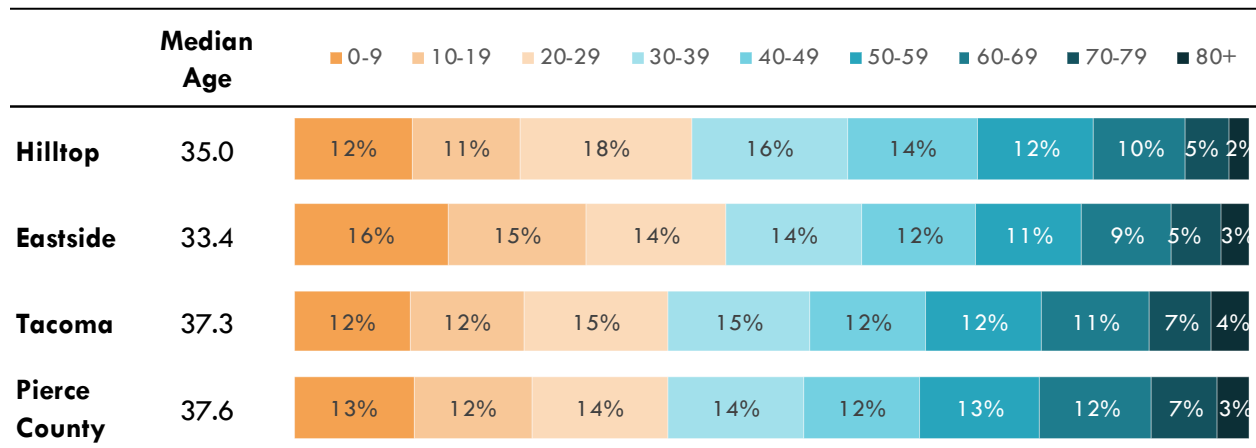


Source: BERK, 2022 (based on PSRC Land Use Vision).

## Age

Exhibit 10 shows that the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods are generally younger than the City of Tacoma and Pierce County overall. Eastside has the lowest median age at 33.4, followed by Hilltop at 35.0. More than 30% of the Eastside population is under the age of 20.

**Exhibit 10. Population by Age, 2021**



Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

Exhibit 11 presents population counts by age group of certain population groups, including population under age 10, between ages 10 and 24, and over age 65.

**Exhibit 11. Population by Age Group, 2021**

Geography	Population Under Age 10	Population Age 10-24	Population Age 65+
<b>Eastside</b>	5,299	6,935	4,074
<b>Hilltop</b>	1,872	2,939	1,652
<b>Tacoma</b>	26,946	41,641	34,561
<b>Pierce County</b>	115,988	174,262	143,055

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

## Housing

In 2021, there were an estimated 11,501 housing units in Eastside and 6,620 in Hilltop. In terms of housing unit growth, both neighborhoods have been growing at a similar rate to Tacoma overall.

## Exhibit 12. Housing Units, 2010-2021

Geography	2010 Total Housing Units	2021 Total Housing Units	2010-2021 Compound Annual Growth Rate
Eastside	10,403	11,501	1.01%
Hilltop	5,971	6,620	1.04%
Tacoma	85,928	94,574	0.96%
Pierce County	325,999	367,873	1.22%

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

Exhibit 13 shows the breakdown between owner- and renter-occupied housing units, commonly called housing tenure, for Eastside and Hilltop. Hilltop has a far greater share of renters, 67%, compared to Eastside, which has 34% renters. Eastside is more similar in housing tenure to Tacoma and Pierce County overall than it is to Hilltop.

## Exhibit 13. Housing Tenure, 2021

	Total Owner Occupied Units	■ Percent Owner	■ Percent Renter	Total Renter Occupied Units
Hilltop	1,937	33%	67%	3,892
Eastside	7,021	66%	34%	3,659
Tacoma	50,019	57%	43%	37,475
Pierce County	229,988	67%	33%	113,837

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

## Race and Ethnicity

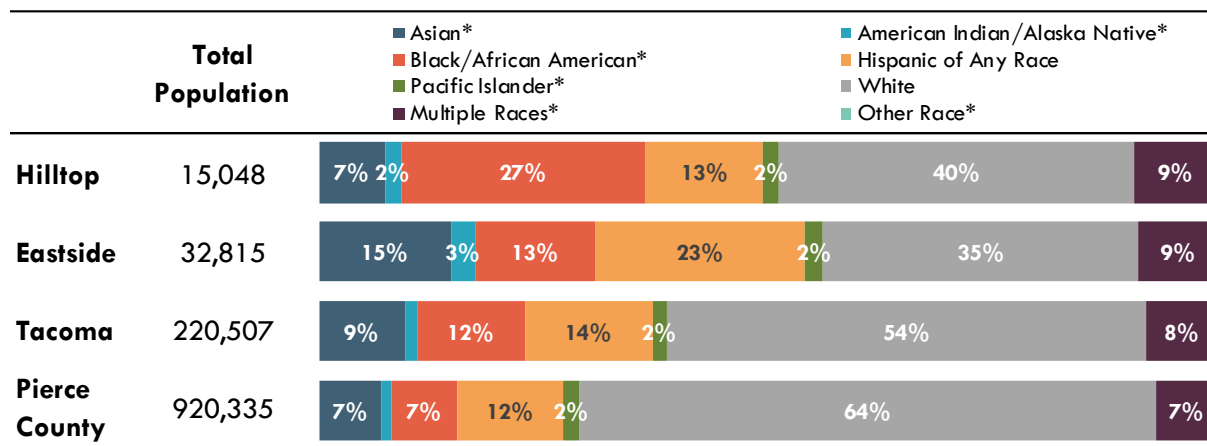
Exhibit 14 shows race and ethnicity for Eastside and Hilltop, both of which are racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Notably, the data below shows race and ethnicity combined. This means that each racial group refers to those people who are non-Hispanic and identify as a given group. The category for people of Hispanic ethnicity refer to Hispanic people of any race.

- Over 85% of Eastside residents are either White (35%), Hispanic (23%), Asian (15%), or Black or African American (13%).
- Roughly 80% of Hilltop residents are either White (40%), Black or African American (27%), or Hispanic (13%).

Both of these neighborhoods are quite distinct in racial and ethnic composition and differ considerably from Tacoma or Pierce County overall.



## Exhibit 14. Race and Ethnicity, 2021



Note: \*Non-Hispanic population.

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

## Language Spoken

This section presents information on primary language spoken for the portion of the population ages five and older who primarily speak a language other than English and speak English 'not well' or 'not at all'. Overall, Hilltop has a relatively low share of people non-English speakers, about 2% of the population, compared to Eastside, where approximately 8% of the population speaks a language other than English and does not speak English proficiently. Exhibit 15 shows this breakdown for the two neighborhoods and Tacoma and Pierce County.

## Exhibit 15. Population Age 5 or Older Who Speak English 'Well', 'Not Well', or 'Not at All', 2021

	Population Age 5+	Speaks English Well	<div><div>■ Speaks English Well</div><div>■ Speaks English Not Well or Not At All</div></div>	Speaks English Not Well or Not At All
Hilltop	13,059	12,757	<div><div>98%</div><div>2%</div></div>	302
Eastside	30,527	27,991	<div><div>92%</div><div>8%</div></div>	2,536
Tacoma	199,231	190,523	<div><div>96%</div><div>4%</div></div>	8,708
Pierce County	818,443	799,007	<div><div>98%</div><div>2%</div></div>	19,436

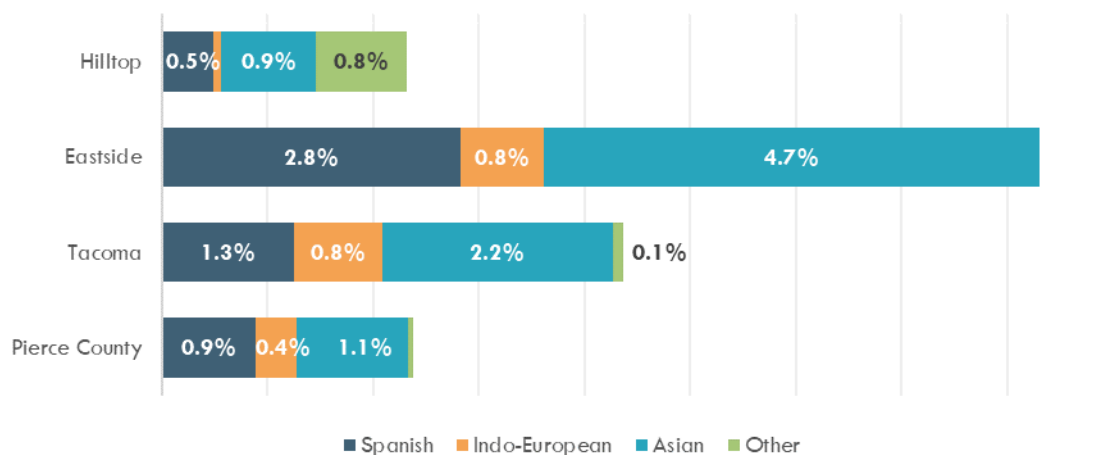
Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

Exhibit 16 shows the language breakdown of the population over age five speaking English 'not well' or 'not at all' in the comparison geographies. These are broad categories, yet still provide helpful context for which language types may be most common in the different communities.

In Eastside, nearly 5% of the non-English speaking population speaks an Asian language, 2.8% speaks Spanish, and 0.8% speaks other Indo-European languages (notably this category includes most languages spoken in India).

In Hilltop, about 0.5% of the non-English speaking population speaks Spanish, 0.9% speaks an Asian language, and 0.8% speaks another language (which include Native American languages, Arabic, Hebrew, and most African languages).

**Exhibit 16. Primary Language Spoken by Population Age 5+ Who Speaks English 'Not Well' or 'Not at All', as a Proportion of Total Population, 2021**



Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

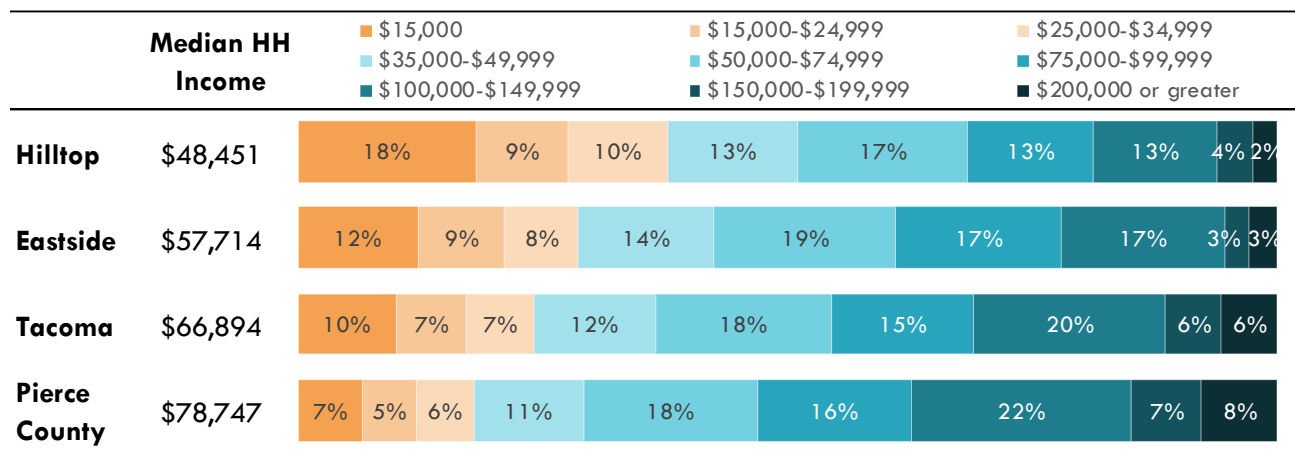
## Income

Exhibit 17 shows median household income and income breakdowns for households by geography. Median household income in the Hilltop neighborhood is nearly \$10,000 less than in Eastside, nearly \$20,000 less than Tacoma overall, and \$30,000 less than Pierce County. Over a third of Hilltop households make under \$35,000 per year.

While comparatively higher income than Hilltop, Eastside still has a significant lower median household income than Tacoma and Pierce County. Nearly 30% of Eastside households make less than \$35,000 per year.

In both neighborhoods, only 6% of households make more than \$150,000 per year, compared to 12% in Tacoma and 15% in Pierce County, indicating a lower accumulation of wealth in these areas.

## Exhibit 17. Household Income, 2021



Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

Another useful metric for understanding income is the population experiencing poverty, which is defined by the federal poverty level (FPL). The FPL is calculated for a family unit, and the threshold varies depending on the number of members of that family unit. The official poverty definition uses income before taxes and does not include capital gains or non-cash benefits like public assistance, Medicaid, and public housing subsidies. The FPL is updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index but does not vary geographically. In 2021, FPL for a family of four is \$26,500.

Exhibit 18 shows the percent of households living in poverty by geography. In both Eastside and Hilltop, roughly 20% of households are living in poverty, compared to 14% in Tacoma and 10% in Pierce County.

## Exhibit 18. Households Experiencing Poverty, 2021

	Total Households*	Households Above Poverty Level	Households Above Poverty Level	Households Below Poverty Level	Households Below Poverty Level
			Households Above Poverty Level	Households Below Poverty Level	
			Households Above Poverty Level	Households Below Poverty Level	
Hilltop	5,322	4,250	80%	20%	1,072
Eastside	10,731	8,678	81%	19%	2,053
Tacoma	83,688	72,222	86%	14%	11,466
Pierce County	323,296	291,888	90%	10%	31,408

Note: \*Total households for which poverty status is determined.

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

## Employment and Unemployment Rates

Employment and labor force participation rates are an important factor in understanding local economic vitality. Exhibit 19 presents labor force participation counts and rates for the civilian population ages 16 and older. Hilltop, with an unemployment rate of 8.9%, has a comparatively higher unemployment rate than Eastside, at just 6.1%, which is much more similar to Tacoma and Pierce County.

### Exhibit 19. Labor Force Participation for Civilians Age 16 and Older, 2021

	Civilian Population Age 16+ in Work Force	Employed Population Age 16+	■ Employed	■ Unemployed	Unemployed Population Age 16+
<b>Hilltop</b>	6,896	6,284	91.1%	8.9%	613
<b>Eastside</b>	15,622	14,667	93.9%	6.1%	955
<b>Tacoma</b>	111,632	105,292	94.3%	5.7%	6,340
<b>Pierce County</b>	458,420	431,840	94.2%	5.8%	26,580

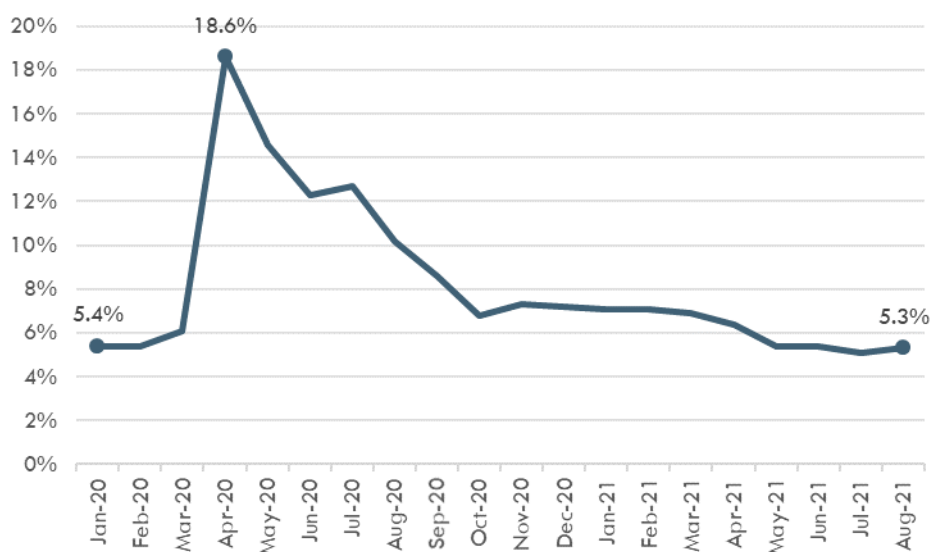
Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

Unemployment is particularly relevant since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data from the Washington State Employment Security Department (WA ESD), unemployment rates for Washington State were at 3.9% in January 2020, hit a high of 16.3% in April 2020, and were at 7.8% in September 2020.

Unemployment rates have continually been decreasing as Washington State has moved towards reopening from the pandemic. While not as geographically specific as the data above, monthly data on unemployment is available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). According to the BLS, the Tacoma-Lakewood area has a 5.3% unemployment rate for August 2021, the most recent month available. Compared to the information above, this confirms that Hilltop has a much higher unemployment rate relative to the region overall.

Exhibit 20 shows how unemployment rates have changed drastically throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Exhibit 20. Tacoma-Lakewood Unemployment Rate, 2020-2021



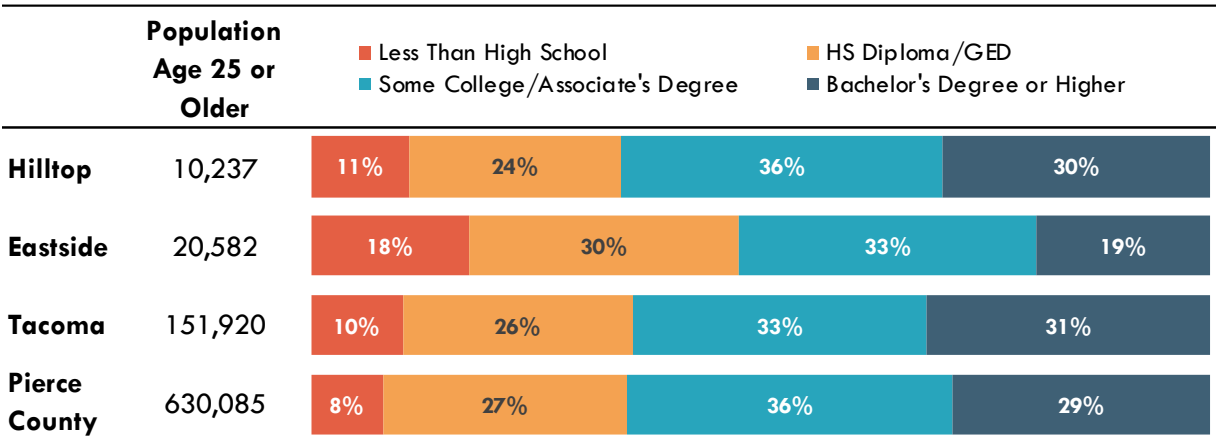
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020-2021; BERK, 2021.

# Adult Educational Attainment

Adult educational attainment is an important factor which influences employment and income opportunities, with an increasing number of jobs requiring post-secondary education, as well as educational outcomes of children.<sup>3</sup>

Exhibit 21 shows the highest educational attainment of adults ages 25 and older. Hilltop has similar educational attainment rates as Tacoma and Pierce County. However, Eastside has a relatively higher percent of people who did not finish high school, at 18%, while 30% only have a high school diploma or GED. Just 19% of Eastside residents ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Exhibit 21. Educational Attainment of Adults Aged 25 and Older



Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.

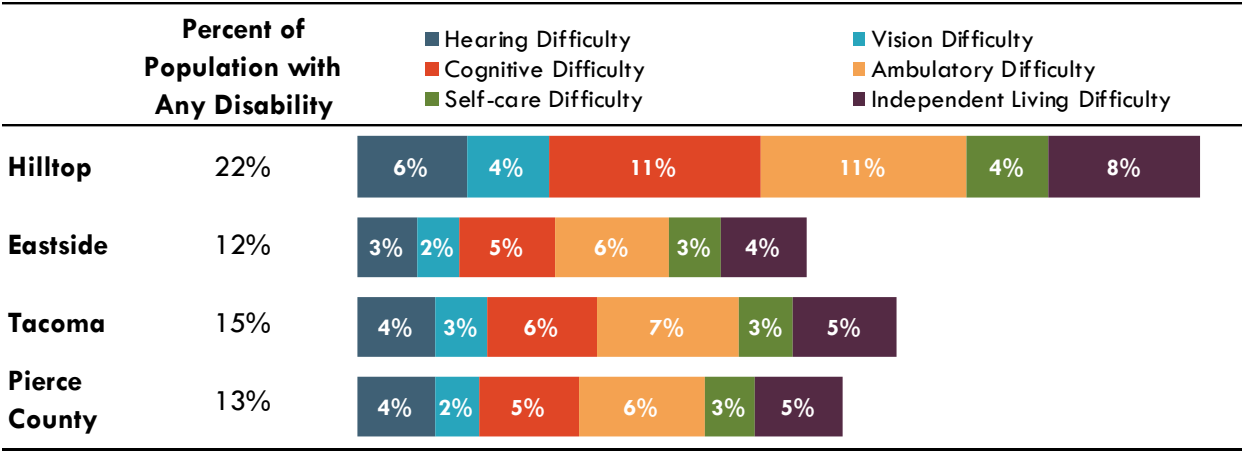
## Population with Disabilities

Exhibit 22 presents disability characteristics of the overall population as self-reported in the American Community Survey. Notably, there are many people who experience more than one disability or difficulty. Therefore, the sum of the percent of individual disabilities below equals a higher number than the total percent of the population with any disability.

Hilltop has a significantly higher prevalence of people with disabilities compared to Eastside, Tacoma, and Pierce County, at 22% of the population. Approximately 11% of the Hilltop population has a cognitive difficulty and 11% has an ambulatory difficulty.

<sup>3</sup> Aud, S., Fox, M. A., & Kewal-Ramani, A. (2010). Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups. National Center for Education Statistics.

**Exhibit 22. Population with Disabilities, 2021**



Sources: ESRI, 2021; U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019; BERK, 2021.

The Joint Center for Housing Studies reports that ambulatory disabilities are particularly common among lower-income households. They note that one-quarter of households earning under \$15,000 a year include someone with an ambulatory disability, more than three times the share among households earning at least \$75,000. Despite widespread need for accessible housing for those with disabilities and those wishing to age in place, only 1% of the national housing stock offers five basic universal design features: no-step entry, single-floor living, extra-wide hallways and doorways, electrical controls reachable from a wheelchair, and lever-style handles on faucets and doors.<sup>4</sup>

## Digital Access

Digital access and overcoming the digital divide are increasingly a part of equity goals and conversations. The U.S. Census indicates that across the county, higher rates of internet subscription were found in households with higher household income and those where the householder had a higher level of educational attainment. Characteristics associated with lower subscription rates were a householder who rented rather than owned a home, households with limited English-speaking ability, and households with at least one person who was disabled.<sup>5</sup>

In Eastside and Hilltop, 15% of households do not have internet access. 'Limited internet' refers to those who do not have broadband or satellite internet. In Hilltop, 8% of households have limited internet, compared to 6% in Eastside. It is interesting that the largest number of households in Tacoma without internet access at home are outside of the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods, speaking to the community-wide need for providing internet access via libraries and other public services.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2017>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/computer-internet-use.html>

**Exhibit 23. Households by Internet Access, 2019**

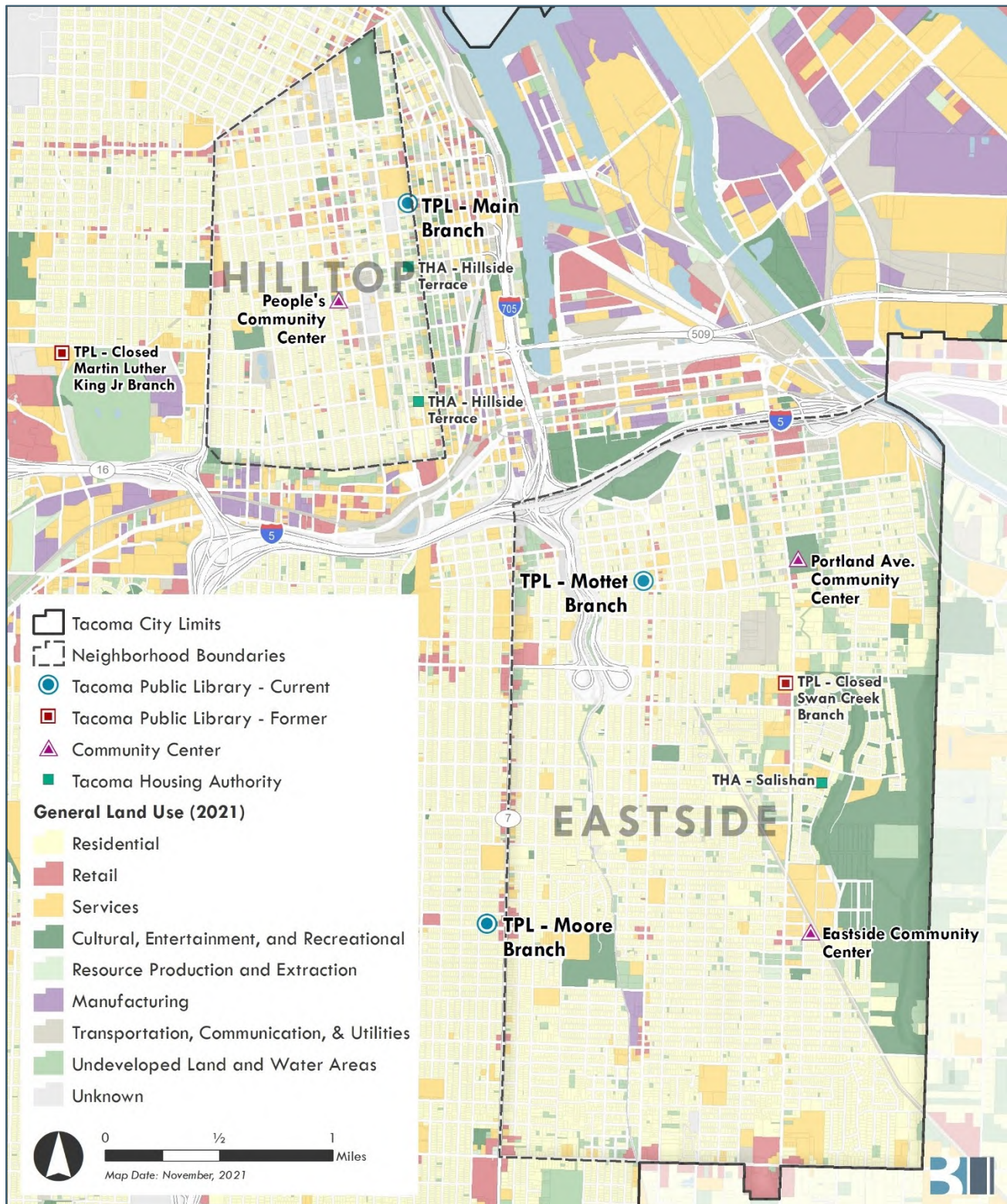
	<b>Total Households</b>	<b>Households With Internet Access</b>	<div> <div>■ With Internet</div> <div>■ With Limited Internet</div> <div>■ Without Internet</div> </div>	<b>Households Without Internet Access</b>
<b>Hilltop</b>	5,812	4,501	<div> <div>77%</div> <div>8%</div> <div>15%</div> </div>	869
<b>Eastside</b>	10,535	8,372	<div> <div>79%</div> <div>6%</div> <div>15%</div> </div>	1,564
<b>Tacoma</b>	85,839	71,862	<div> <div>84%</div> <div>5%</div> <div>12%</div> </div>	10,026
<b>Pierce County</b>	335,278	294,171	<div> <div>88%</div> <div>3%</div> <div>9%</div> </div>	30,253

Sources: ESRI, 2021 (based on US Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, 2015-2019); BERK, 2021.



# Built Environment

Exhibit 24. General Land Use, 2021



Sources: Pierce County Assessor, BERK, 2021

# Transportation Infrastructure

The Eastside and Hilltop subareas are primarily residential areas that have been historically auto-centric, with lower density land-uses than Downtown Tacoma. However, these areas are still served by a variety of modes, including sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities and transit. Existing infrastructure conditions for each of these modes are summarized in the following sub-sections, with near-term or planned improvements identified where applicable. The findings of these subsections are informed by relevant planning documents and conversations the consulting team has had with Tacoma City Staff.

## Roadways and Parking

Exhibit 25 shows the functional classification of major roadways in and around both the Eastside and Hilltop subareas.

The Eastside subarea is served by the Pacific Avenue, McKinley Avenue and Portland Avenue north-south arterials and the S 38th Street, S 48th Street, S 56th Street, S 64th Street, and S 72nd Street east-west arterials. North-south connectivity is relatively good within the Eastside subarea; however, east-west vehicular mobility can be a challenge, with multiple east-west connections (such as 48th Street) broken up by railroad tracks or other roadway misalignments. In these cases, vehicles are forced to route to one of the other east-west arterials in the subarea. The Eastside has little to no on-street parking regulations that could impact on-street parking for a proposed library location.

In the case of Hilltop, the subarea is served by the Yakima Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr. Way, and Sprague Avenue north-south arterials. Additionally, the subarea is served by the Division Street, S 6th Avenue, S 9th Street, S 11th Street, Earnest S Brazill Street, S 15th Street, and S 19th Street east-west arterials which provide connection to Downtown. Due to the number of arterial and connector roadways in close proximity to each other in the Hilltop subarea, vehicular mobility is relatively good within the subarea, particularly to the east near Downtown. There are some parking regulations and residential parking zones within the Hilltop subarea that could limit on-street parking for library patrons, particularly around the St Joseph's Medical Campus and just south of Wright Park.



## Exhibit 25. Roadway Classifications in Eastside and Hilltop



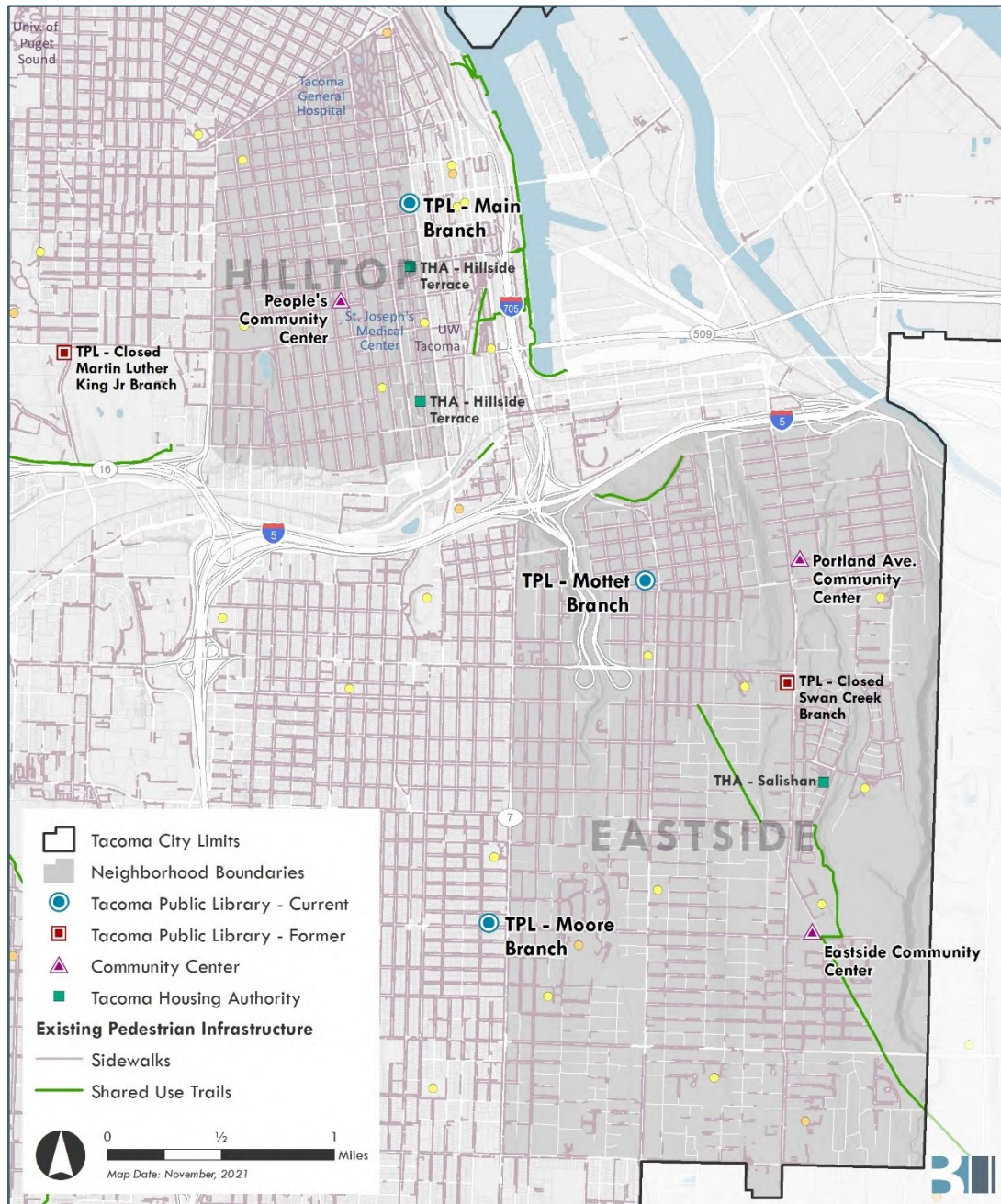
Sources: City of Tacoma Transportation Master Plan, 2015; Fehr & Peers, 2021.

## Pedestrian Network

Sidewalks are generally provided on all major roadways in Tacoma, especially near Downtown. Additionally, the City of Tacoma has some local and regional shared-use paths and trails that provide safe mobility for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrian infrastructure in and around the Eastside and Hilltop subareas is shown in Exhibit 26. Almost the entirety of the Hilltop subarea has existing sidewalk on one or both sides of the road. However, Eastside's pedestrian infrastructure is more disconnected, with many of the residential roadways in the subarea not having sidewalks, particularly east of McKinley Avenue. This is supplemented somewhat by the recently constructed Pipeline Trail, which provides a

separated shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists to use that connects portions of Eastside from 40th Street E to the southern city border.

## Exhibit 26. Pedestrian Infrastructure Serving the Eastside and Hilltop Areas



Sources: Adapted from City of Tacoma Transportation Master Plan, 2015; Fehr & Peers, 2021.



## Bicycle Network

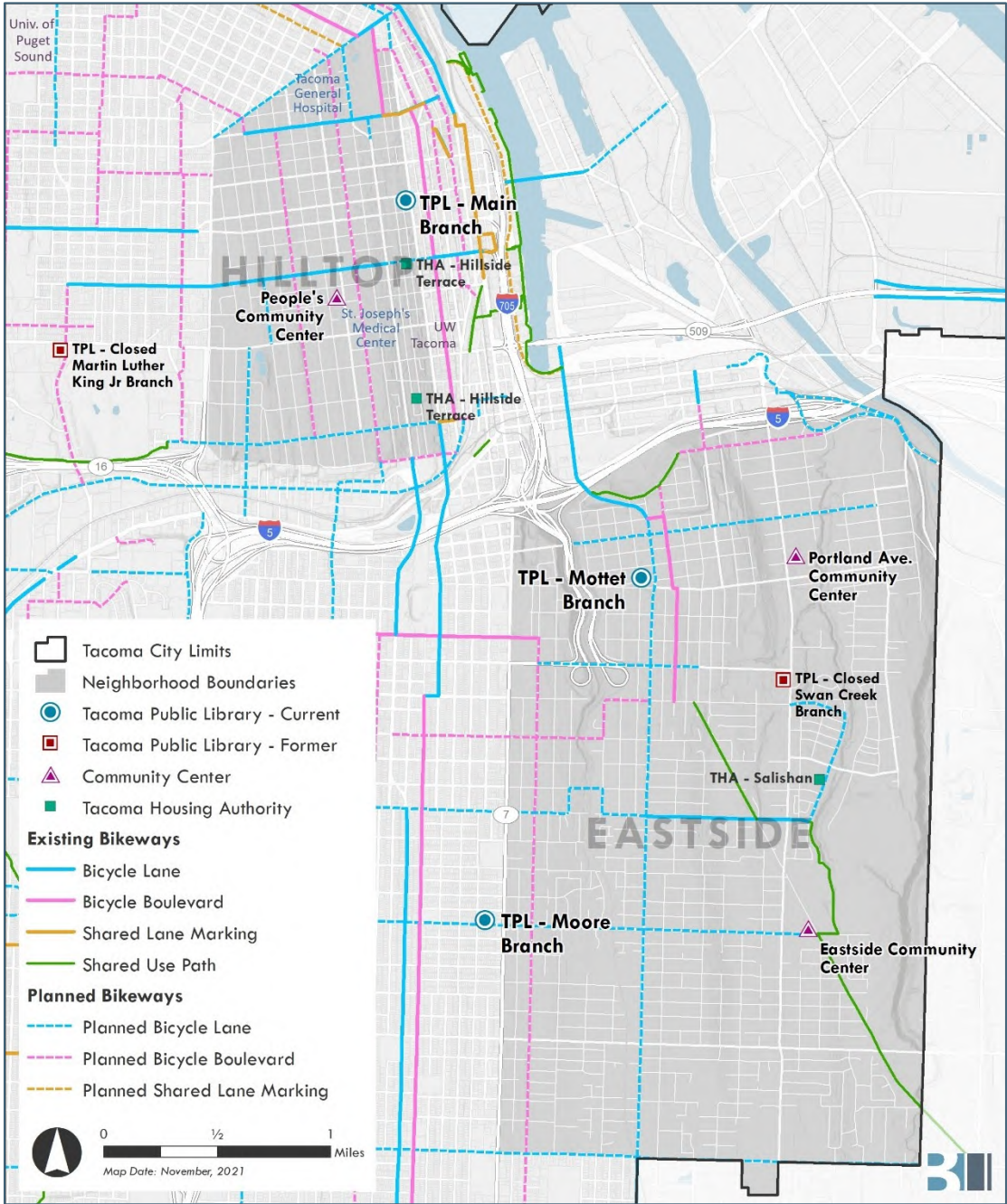
Bicycle connectivity in Tacoma is relatively limited, with some shared use paths and bicycle corridors providing mobility along major roadways. Existing and planned bicycle infrastructure in and around the Eastside and Hilltop subareas follow this same trend and are shown in Exhibit 27. Bicycle infrastructure within the City of Tacoma is broken into the following categories:

- **Bicycle Lane.** An exclusive on-street one way lane for bicyclists delineated with signage and striping. Bicycle lanes may be on one or both sides of the roadway.
- **Bicycle Boulevard.** A bicycle-focused roadway designated with enhanced signage and special pavement markings and bicycle friendly design standards such as wide curb lanes and bicycle safe drain grates. Typically designed to connect key bicycle destinations.
- **Shared Lane Marking.** A lane shared by vehicles and bicycles. Wider lanes that may be delineated with shared use markings and signage.
- **Shared Use Path.** A non-motorized two-way facility that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier. Also includes trail facilities.

The Eastside subarea has east-west bicycle lanes along S 48th Street east of McKinley Avenue. These facilities connect to the Pipeline Trail shared use path, providing some north-south connectivity for those east of McKinley Avenue that also connects to a north-south bicycle boulevard on Spokane Street. However, these are the only three existing bicycle facilities in the subarea, making bicycle connectivity limited for those west of McKinley Avenue or those living far away from S 48th Street. As with the Hilltop subarea, there are multiple bicycle facilities planned for Eastside, but none of these currently have construction funding, nor would they provide much more improved connection within Eastside than what already exists east of McKinley Avenue.

Hilltop has a few east-west bicycle facilities serving it, including bicycle lanes along S 15th Street, S 6th Avenue, and S 12th Street. Additionally, Hilltop has multiple north-south bicycle facilities planned for the future. However, none of those planned facilities in the Hilltop subarea currently have received funding for construction.

Exhibit 27. Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities Serving the Eastside and Hilltop Areas



Sources: City of Tacoma Transportation Master Plan, 2015; Fehr & Peers, 2021.

## Transit

Tacoma is provided by both Pierce Transit and Sound Transit. Pierce Transit provides a variety of bus routes that serve the various communities and subareas in and around Tacoma. Bus routes that specifically provide connectivity within the Eastside and Hilltop subareas are summarized in Exhibit 28. Based on this table, all transit lines within these two subareas operate with buses every 30 minutes, with Pierce Transit 1 shifting to every 15 minutes during the peak periods of the day and Pierce Transit 2 operating every 20 minutes.

Sound Transit operates the Tacoma Link light rail system within Tacoma. Sound Transit also provides multiple commuter connections, including Sound Transit Express and Sounder Commuter Rail; however, these commuter connections do not currently impact connectivity and mobility within the Eastside and Hilltop subareas and are not considered here.

Pierce Transit bus routes in and around the subareas, as well as the Tacoma Link, are shown in Exhibit 29. It can be seen that the Hilltop subarea is served by a variety of transit lines, particularly in the eastern portion near Downtown. This will be further improved by the completion of the Hilltop Link Extension in 2022. However, the western portions of the subarea have more limited transit access, with no north-south transit connections. The Eastside subarea likewise has limited transit access, with transit routes focusing on a few major corridors, but leaving many residential streets with limited ability to access transit.

Exhibit 29 also shows two near-term high-capacity transit improvements that will impact transit connectivity within the subareas:

- **Sound Transit Hilltop Link Extension:** Sound Transit is currently extending the Tacoma Link light rail system to the Hilltop subarea from Downtown, with stops along Martin Luther King Way. This will provide service every 10 minutes during the daytime, greatly improving transit connectivity on the east side of the Hilltop subarea. This light rail expansion will also allow Pierce Transit to reevaluate feeder routes in Hilltop and other residential areas to better provide transit coverage for these areas. This project is planned to be completed in 2022.
- **Pierce Transit Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit:** Pierce Transit Route 1 is planned to be converted into a bus rapid transit line, increase service to every 10 minutes during the peak periods of the day. Introduction of this bus rapid transit line will also allow Pierce Transit to reevaluate feeder routes in Eastside and other residential areas to better provide transit coverage. This project is planned to be implemented by 2024.

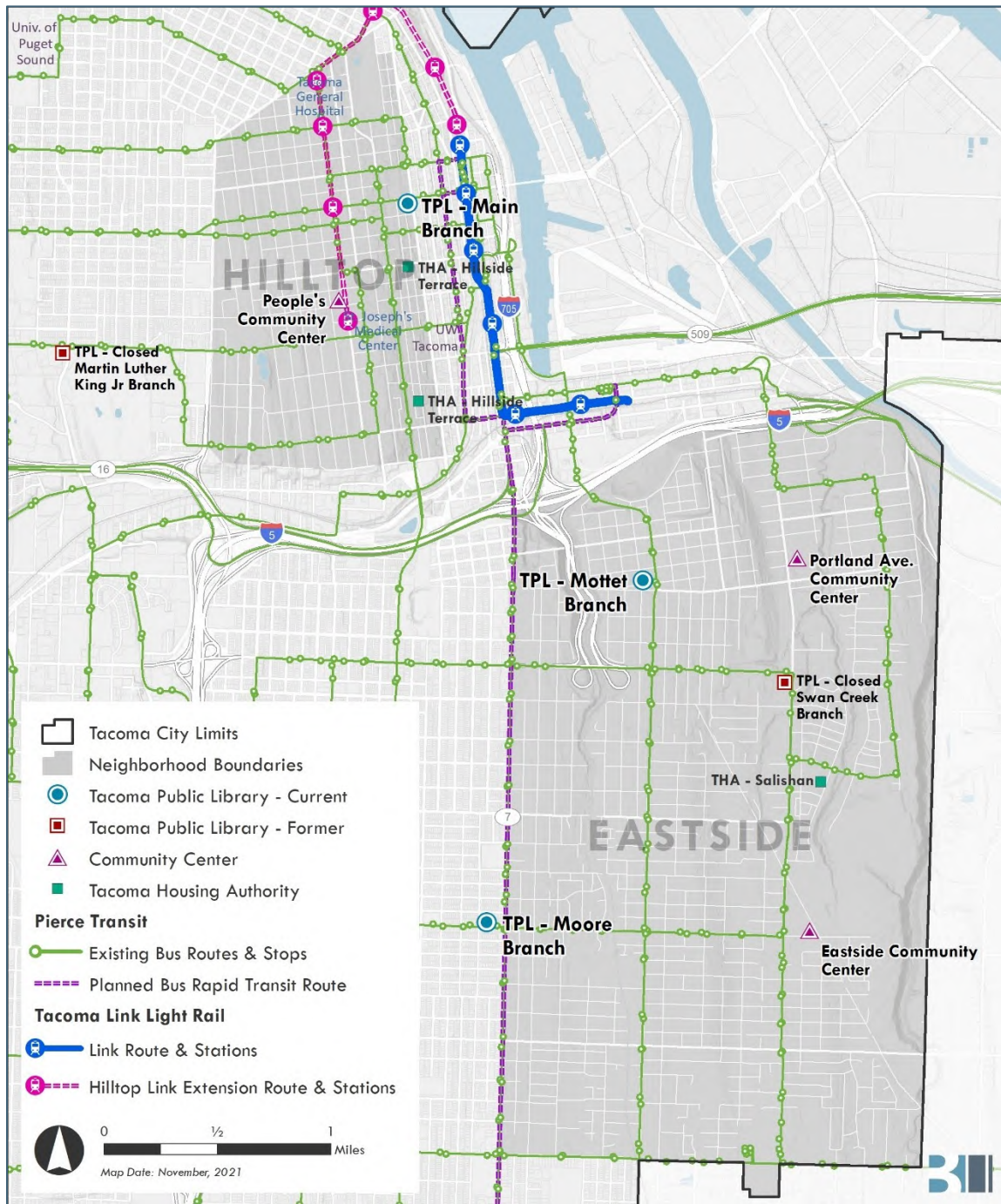


**Exhibit 28. Pierce Transit Bus Routes Serving the Eastside and Hilltop Areas**

Route	Name	Daytime Frequency
<b>Hilltop Subarea</b>		
<b>PT 1</b>	6th Avenue – Pacific Avenue	15-min peak; 30-min off-peak
<b>PT 2</b>	S 19th Street – Bridgeport	20-min
<b>PT 28</b>	S 12th Street	30-min
<b>PT 45</b>	Yakima	30-min
<b>PT 48</b>	Sheridan – M Street	30-min
<b>PT 57</b>	Union – S 19th Street - Hilltop	30-min
<b>Eastside Subarea</b>		
<b>PT 1</b>	6th Avenue – Pacific Avenue	15-min peak; 30-min off-peak
<b>PT 41</b>	S 56th Street - Salishan	30-min
<b>PT 42</b>	McKinley Avenue	30-min
<b>PT 54</b>	S 38th Street – Portland Avenue	30-min
<b>PT 202</b>	S 72nd Street	30-min

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2021.

## Exhibit 29. Transit Routes Serving or Near the Eastside and Hilltop Areas



Sources: Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, 2021; Fehr & Peers, 2021.

## Transportation Conditions Summary

The Eastside and Hilltop neighborhood subareas have varied multimodal transportation infrastructure. The Hilltop subarea has robust transit and pedestrian infrastructure, as well multiple bicycle connections, particularly on the east side of the subarea near Downtown. On the other hand, the Eastside has more limited connectivity and infrastructure, with the subarea divided by the railroad tracks and served by limited bicycle and transit infrastructure along major corridors. Additionally, there are several gaps in the Eastside sidewalk network, making active transportation mobility more limited throughout the subarea.

On-street parking is fairly accessible for both subareas, with some parking regulation existing in Hilltop near medical campuses, but otherwise largely unregulated. As TPL considers locations for the Eastside and Hilltop libraries, it will be important to consider nearby active transportation infrastructure to ensure locations are reachable by a variety of users.

# Existing Library Services and Uses

This section provides an overview of the Tacoma Public Library system, with particular focus on the libraries in or adjacent to the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. The pandemic has significantly impacted library offerings and use. For the most part we focus here on pre-pandemic conditions, with a brief description library use during the pandemic on page 47.

## Tacoma Public Strategic Plan 2020-2025

The Tacoma Public Library embarked on a comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process that resulted in the [Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025](#). It incorporated a robust community engagement process and articulated a Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Goals that speak to the needs of residents community wide. The Plan is summarized below, with emphasis given to those Community Goals that most directly relate to the effort to restore library services to the Eastside and Hilltop communities.

### *Strategic Plan Summary*

**Mission.** We empower our community by bringing people together to discover, connect, create, learn, and thrive.

**Vision.** We are radically welcoming: a trusted community hub where all people can find joy, compassion, and inspiration.

### **Values**

- **We work to break down barriers of access.** Our commitment to racial equity and social justice guides our work, allowing us to learn about and respond to Tacoma's diverse communities' needs and opportunities.
- **We believe that learning is a human right.** We work to provide free access to information and ideas from diverse points of view and encourage our community to explore new ideas, perspectives, and experiences
- **We foster a culture of teamwork.** We engage with our community, our partners, and one another to cultivate collaboration and innovation
- **We are committed stewards of our human, environmental, and financial resources.** We practice equitable decision-making and resource allocation, and take an active, visible role in supporting sustainable and resilient communities

### **Strategic Planning Priorities and supporting Community Goals and Operational Goals**

- **Equity and Access** We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma's diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.
  - Provide convenient access to library services, resources, and programs.
  - Provide current and culturally relevant resources and services.
  - Provide spaces that welcome all cultures, abilities, and communities.
  - Provide inclusive, friendly, and expert customer service.

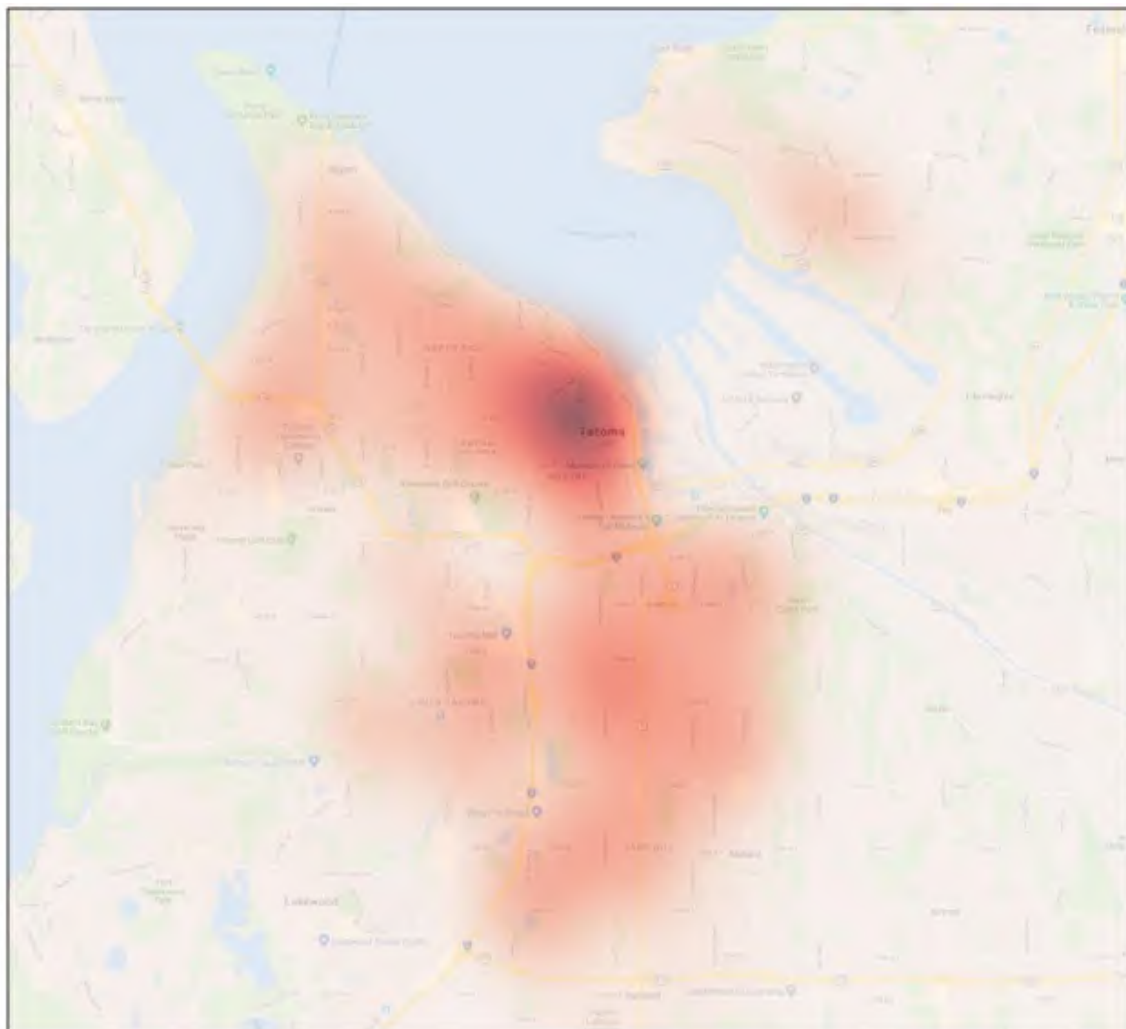
- **Learning, Creativity, and Innovation** We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.
  - Expand learning opportunities for the community.
  - Provide resources that optimize the potential to learn, create, and innovate.
  - Equip staff with the skills and support to meet the needs of Tacoma’s diverse communities.
- **Investment in Youth** We believe that youth are the future and we will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.
  - Expand learning opportunities for youth ages 0-24.
  - Provide resources and services that address unique needs and interests of youth in our diverse communities.
  - Grow alliances with educational partners.
  - Prioritize resource allocation to support youth services.
- **Cultivate and Engage Community** We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.
  - Identify successful partners to leverage and extend library services.
  - Extend services beyond library walls by partnering with community-oriented organizations.
  - Demonstrate the role of libraries in Tacoma’s thriving, multicultural communities.
- **Responsible and Resilient** We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.
  - Support the Tacoma 2025 vision of equity, economy, education, livability, and civic engagement.
  - Provide services for culturally diverse and vulnerable communities.
  - Grow strong public and private support that positions the library as a model of sustainability, collaboration, and equitable practices.
  - Develop an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan that addresses race and social justice and focuses on serving Tacoma’s marginalized communities.

In summarizing community input, the strategic plan document notes the following:

**Tacoma wants spaces and resources that are accessible, welcoming, and relevant to all cultures, abilities, and communities.** Inclusivity and the idea of being “radically welcoming” were common themes that we heard throughout our community engagement. Libraries are community hubs where people enjoy opportunities for individual contemplation as well as gathering with neighbors. TPL can bring people together from all segments of the community and become, as one individual envisioned, “a community living room.” Many participants focused on the importance of locating libraries in communities and neighborhoods where their services are most needed. *The closures of library branches in the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods have been a significant loss and detriment to the communities there, specifically the African American community in the Hilltop and the Latinx community in the Eastside. Rebuilding trust and the commitment to make library service a priority in these neighborhoods should be given strong consideration.”* [our emphasis]

A heat map produced for the planning process and shown in Exhibit 30 demonstrates that “the highest concentrations of active Library users in Tacoma are in the Central Tacoma/Hilltop neighborhoods.”

**Exhibit 30. Heatmap of Geocoded Addresses of Active Library Users**



Sources: TPL, 2020.

Planning documentation also noted that “Some survey respondents and forum participants were particularly critical of the Main Library and felt that it needed to be re-imagined and redesigned to reflect a more contemporary library building and service model.”

## Overview of the Tacoma Public Library System

Exhibit 31 maps the full TPL system, as well as neighboring Pierce County Library System branches and Exhibit 32 presents a summary of facility size and age; collections and circulation; and public access computers for each TPL branch and the system overall.

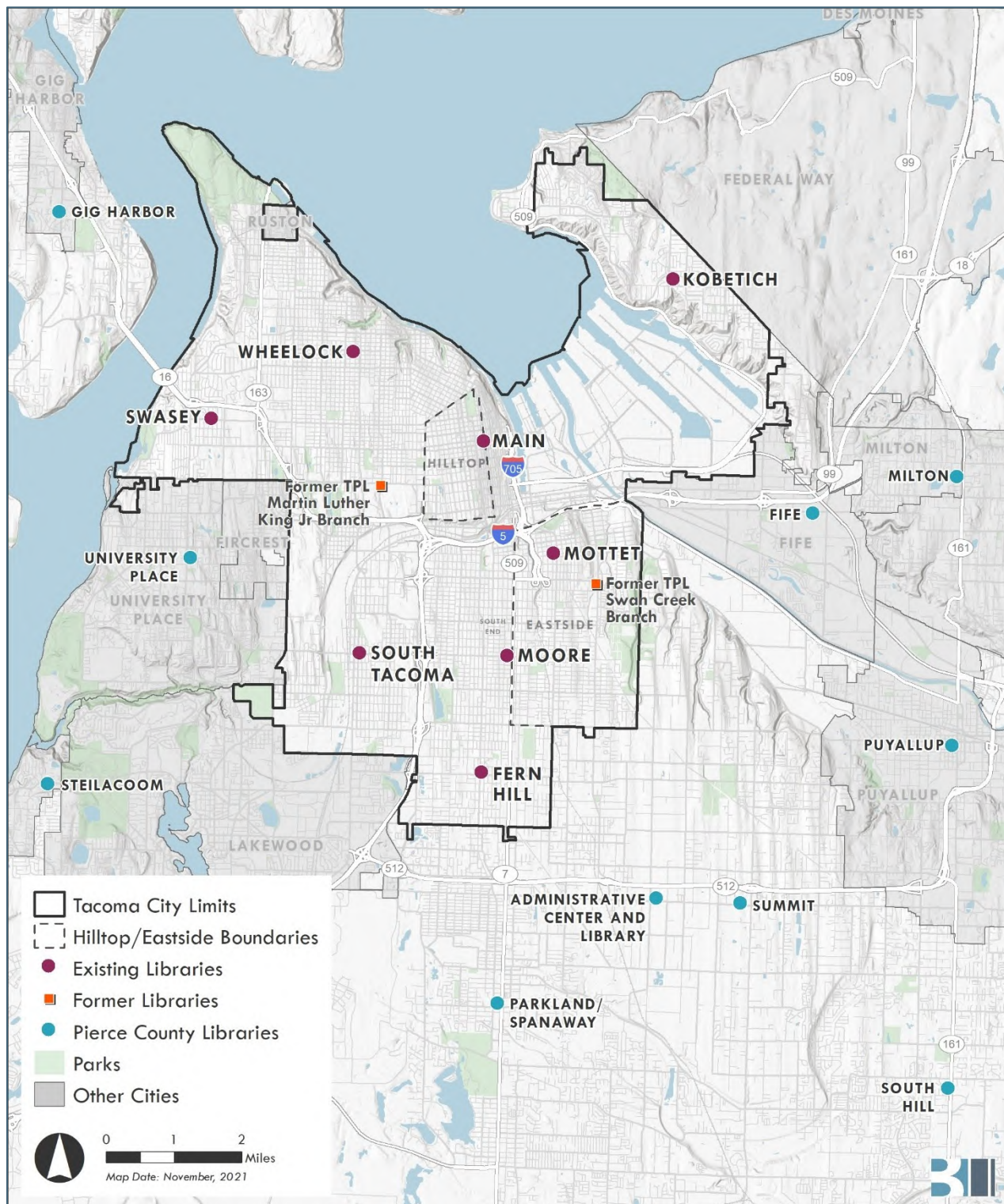
In addition to the Main Library, which is further described below, the TPL system includes seven neighborhood and regional libraries. Prior to the pandemic, all TPL facilities were open 40 hours a week, on the same schedule: open Tuesday through Saturday, closed Sunday and Monday.



In general, the facilities infrastructure at TPL is old and has not been updated to accommodate contemporary public library uses and user needs. Spaces for individual study, small group work, larger community meetings, early childhood education centers, teen media labs and content creation spaces are all part of 21st century public library infrastructures that are largely lacking in TPL's current facilities. The newest branch was built in 1989, more than 30 years ago, which is also when the most recent structural occurred.



**Exhibit 31. Tacoma Public Library Locations**



Sources: TPL, Pierce County, BERK, 2021

**Exhibit 32. Library Facilities, Collections, Circulation, and Public Computers, by Branch**

	Physical Facility				Collections and Circulation				Public Computers	
	Square Feet <sup>2</sup>	% of System Total	Year Original Construction <sup>2</sup>	Year of Most Recent Structural Remodel <sup>2</sup>	(Physical) Collection <sup>2</sup>	% of System Total	Circulation (Physical Materials) <sup>3</sup>	% of System Total	All <sup>2</sup>	% of System Total
Fern Hill Branch	7,996	5%	1989		49,951	8%	16,621	7%	17	7%
Kobetich Branch	4,882	3%	1980	1980	32,442	6%	21,124	9%	8	3%
Main Library <sup>1</sup>	95,727	59%	1903	1988	241,456	41%	30,580	13%	96	41%
Moore Branch	15,487	9%	1988		75,281	13%	31,823	13%	31	13%
Mottet Branch	5,024	3%	1930	1989	23,422	4%	10,996	5%	25	11%
South Tacoma Branch	7,645	5%	1959	1987	32,944	6%	15,338	6%	17	7%
Swasey Branch	9,686	6%	1960	1987	50,826	9%	28,300	12%	18	8%
Wheelock Branch	16,932	10%	1927	1988	82,672	14%	81,997	35%	22	9%
	<b>163,379</b>	<b>100%</b>			<b>588,994</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>236,779</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Collection figure does not include Northwest Room collections.

<sup>2</sup> From 2020 Washington Public Library Statistical Report, as reported by TPL.

<sup>3</sup> As of November 2, 2021.

Sources: TPL, 2020 Washington Public Library Statistical Report, BERK, 2021.

## Main, Mottet, and Moore

This section describes the three TPL facilities in or adjacent to the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods: the Main Library and the Moore and Mottet Branches. The location of these facilities is shown in Exhibit 31 and Exhibit 32 summarizes building size, collections and circulation, and number of public access computers.

- Pre-pandemic, Main holds held over 40% of the system's total collections but sees only about 13% of total circulation.
- At 5,024 sq ft (the second smallest in the TPL system), Mottet holds 4% of system collection and contributes 5% of overall circulation.
- Moore serves as a regional library. Moore is larger than Mottet, at 15,487 sq ft, and busier, with 13% of system collection and circulation.

### The Main Library

The Main Library is located at 1102 Tacoma Ave South, between Downtown Tacoma and the Hilltop neighborhood. The slope from Downtown to Main is quite steep, as is the grade from Main to Hilltop.

The original Main Library was designed by Jardin, Kent and Jardin of New York and built in 1903 through a donation by Andrew Carnegie (Exhibit 33). The historic library was augmented in 1952 based on a design by Silas E. Nelsen (Exhibit 34). The Main Library was last renovated in 1988, and today retains the hybrid nature of the historic building and the 1952 addition.

TPL owns the parcel and library buildings, and the Carnegie library was placed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places in 1975 after being designated as a historic building by Tacoma City Council in 1974. The nominating form notes that "certain 'improvements' were made in 1952 and much of the blond oak was painted over and some of the marble was removed<sup>6</sup>."

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/planning/historic-preservation/NominationDocs/1102%20Tacoma%20Ave%20So,%20Carnegie%20Library,%20Tacoma%20Public%20Library.pdf>



**Exhibit 33. Carnegie Library, ca 1907**



Source: Tacoma Public Library, General Photograph Collection CNC-08

**Exhibit 34. Carnegie and its Addition, 1952**



Source: Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D69490-5

Today, the Carnegie structure is home to the Northwest Room on the second floor, and a large multi-purpose room, the Olympic Room, on the first floor. The addition houses Main's public service areas and collections, staff offices, storage, and other back-office functions. Public access to the building has been limited during the pandemic, and the Library is currently in process of consolidating public functions on the first floor, with the second floor being converted to serve as a home for non-profit organizations. Priority is being given to organizations with a Mission and functioning that complement's the Library's role in the community. The goal is to host organizations that activate the space with events and public functions.

Prior to adaptations made during the pandemic, public services were supported by:

- Collections that constitute over 40% of the system total. Much of this collection is dated and not well used; TPL is in the process of refining its Main collections.
- 35 public service staff and 2 service points.
- 50 seats for users.
- 63 public access computers.

Two rooms are used for programming, events, and other public meetings and functions:

- The Olympic Room is a large space located on the first floor of the Carnegie building with a capacity of 245.
- A conference room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 1952 addition can accommodate 8.

These spaces are not well-suited to contemporary library usage, both in terms of size, with one too large and one too small, and design. Contemporary libraries have a mix of meeting and study spaces to accommodate individual needs, small groups, and large groups. These spaces can be configured to meet the needs of the programs provided and have the furniture, technology, and equipment for a variety of programmatic needs.

In addition to public service areas and space currently allocated to host non-profit organizations, the following administrative and back-office uses of Main are important to note:

- Library administration is housed on the third floor, with offices for the Library Director and other staff, a board room, and Technology Services.
- The basement of the newer building houses:
  - **Staff workspaces** for 24 public service staff. The space can be fairly described as uninviting, with no windows and poor lighting.
  - The **Library Facilities** team and functions, including storage and a wood shop.
  - **Compact shelving for collections**, including government documents and a significant portion of the Northwest Collection, including both processed and unprocessed items. While the public does not have direct access to these collections, Northwest Room staff can retrieve processed items and frequently access the space to perform ongoing cataloging and digitization of the materials.
  - **Space for technical circulation service functions, including materials circulation.** The space is not well suited to these core library functions, requiring use of a dumbwaiter and repeated unergonomic lifting and moving materials by staff.

- **A loading dock** for deliveries and transport of materials between Main and branch libraries.

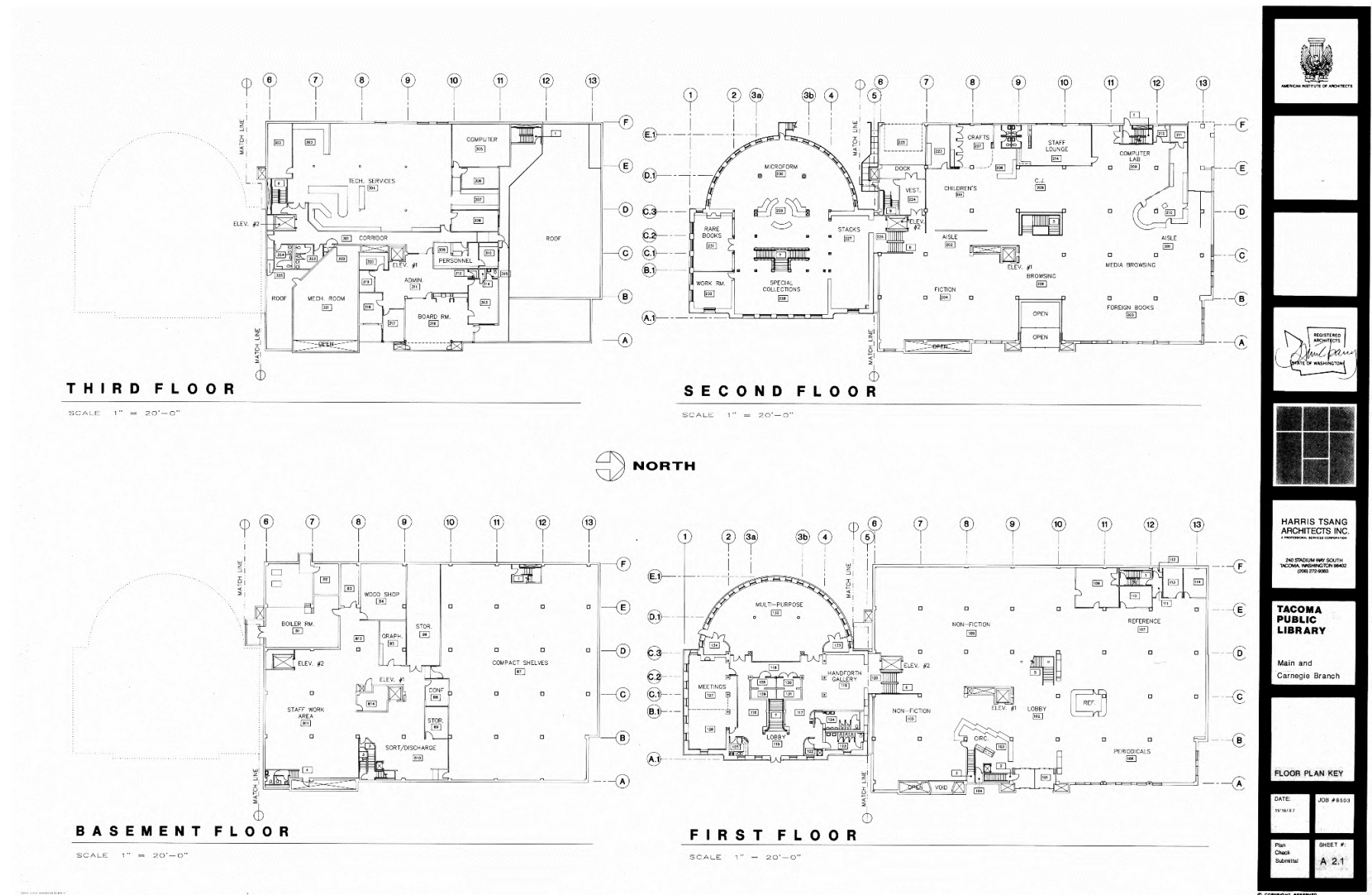
Exhibit 35 describes approximate space allocations and Exhibit 36 illustrates the layout of the Main Library.

**Exhibit 35. Main Library Space Allocations**

<b>Use</b>	<b>Sq. Ft.</b>
<b>Public Service Areas (first and second floors)</b>	<b>66,027</b>
Carnegie	16,012
<i>Northwest Room</i>	<i>[6,927]</i>
All Other Public Service Areas (including 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor use by non-profit organizations during the pandemic)	35,223
<b>TPL Offices (third floor)</b>	<b>14,898</b>
Administration	1,955
Tech Services	4,312
Finance Office	465
All Other	8,166
<b>Basement</b>	<b>21,082</b>
Facilities (including boiler room)	2,021
Staff Area (including Facilities)	10,026
Stacks and Document Storage	9,035
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,289</b>

Sources: TPL, 2021; BERK, 2022.

**Exhibit 36. Layout of Main Library**



Source: TPL 2021



## Main Collections

As illustrated in Exhibit 32, the pre-pandemic Main Library collection contained more than 240,000 items, equivalent to just over 40% of TPL's total collection and accounting for 13% of total system circulation. Items held in Main may be transferred to other library facilities for pick up library patrons.

**Northwest Room.** In addition to its general collection, the Main Library holds approximately 70,000 cataloged Northwest Room items. Some of these items are available for direct public access via the Northwest Room, which is located on the second floor of the Carnegie building. Approximately 630 cubic feet in the basement of the newer library building hold processed records, manuscripts, and photographs which can be retrieved for public use by Library staff. The above count does not include approximately 40 shelving ranges and 65 file cabinets which contain unprocessed records, manuscripts, and photographs, also stored in the 1952 building basement, or additional holdings stored in off-site storage trailers.

In addition to these physical holdings, the Northwest Collection includes nearly 790,000 individual items in an online database. Most of these items are text only entries and not digital objects, either digitized physical items or native digital files. There is no way to enumerate the Library's holdings of digital objects.

## Mottet Branch

The Mottet Branch is located in the Eastside neighborhood, a short distance from the McKinley Neighborhood Business District as shown in Exhibit 3. It is located on a quiet residential street depicted in Exhibit 37 and holds the smallest share of TPL's collections, with the lowest share of circulation (Exhibit 32). The parcel is owned by Tacoma Library and the facility is the second smallest in the system, at just over 5,000 square feet. The public service space is currently fully dedicated to collections.

Exhibit 37. Mottet Branch



Source: Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer, 2021.

## Moore Branch

The Moore Branch is a larger regional library, with nearly 15,500 square feet and the second highest circulation in the system (Exhibit 32). It is located just to the south of the Eastside neighborhood at the intersection of two busy arterials: South 56<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific Avenue, which delineates the boundary between the Eastside and the South End (Exhibit 3). The property is owned by TPL and the building features a large meeting room which receives frequent use.

Exhibit 38. Moore Branch



Source: Google Maps, 2021.

## Library Access and Usage During the Pandemic

The Tacoma Public Library published a report of the use of their digital collections during the pandemic (January 1, 2019-February 29, 2020 compared to use in March 2020). One important conclusion was the growth in use of its various digital resource during the period that library buildings were closed to the public. Digital ebook, e-audio books and e-magazines checkouts usage was up from 12 to 59%, depending on the individual e-service. Streaming video usage increased from 47% using the service Hoopla to a “whopping” 164% through the service Kanopy.

There were equally large, if not larger, jumps in usage of educational online services for students. Scholastic Teachables saw a jump of over 500% and the crafting/DIY service creativebug increased viewership by 101%. Many of the users of these services were new users: Overdrive saw 107% new users, Hoopla saw 222% new users and courses in lynda.com had 143% new users.

TPL’s resources for students and teachers working at home were tremendously popular. Skill building sessions and use homework tutors on brain fuse increased by 91% and usage/sessions on Scholastic Teachables grew by more than 837%. In short, the TPL was a resource for learning and teaching was critically important to the community.

Library virtual programming had a significant impact as well. Programs such as Lunchtime Stories and Friday Family Storytime spurred TPL’s YouTube channel views increase by almost 2000% and TPL Facebook Video by 356%.

Workforce development and personal enrichment services such as LinkedIn Learning and Ancestry saw significant increased as well. Much of the increased usage was made possible by TPL’s online applications for library cards. In April 2020, for example, there was an almost 200% increase in the average of eCards issued.

TPL’s users were laudatory about the availability of services during the pandemic when buildings were closed. Access to digital services and digital programs reinforced the importance and impact TPL has in the community.

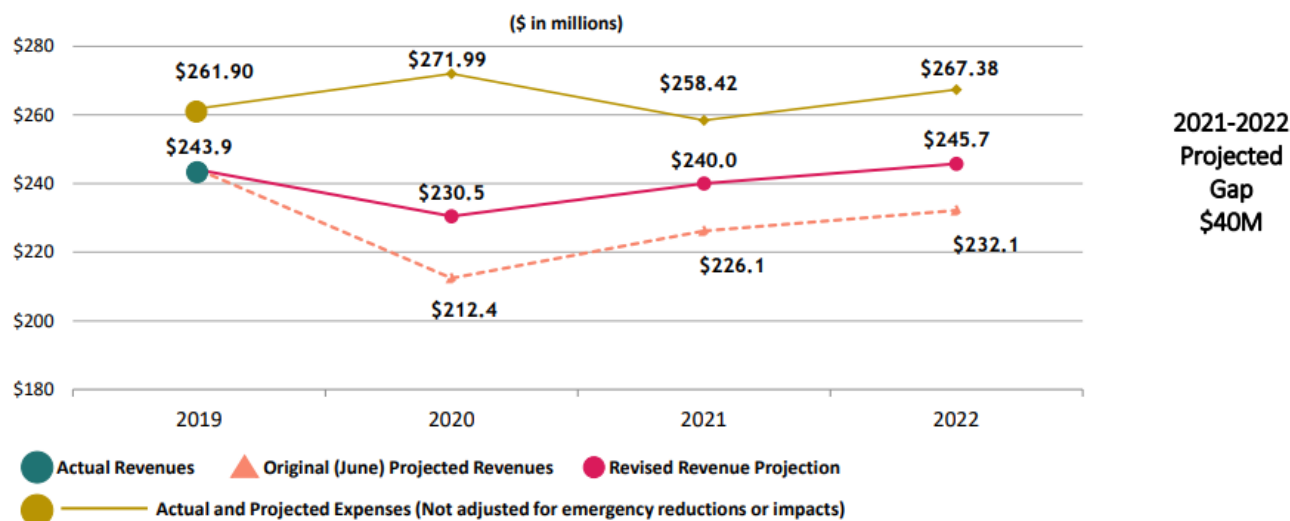
# Financial Context

This section uses publicly available data from the City of Tacoma, the Washington State Library, and Washington State Auditor’s Office to describe the financial context for the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma Public Library. The goal of this section is to provide an overview of the City and Library’s operating and capital budgets and to compare TPL’s resources to peer libraries in the region.

## City of Tacoma

The City of Tacoma, like many Washington cities, is financially constrained by the effect of several tax-limiting measures, as well as increases in operating costs that are outpacing revenue growth. The City’s projected general fund shortfall for the 2021-2022 biennium was \$40 million based on a continuation of current levels of service (Exhibit 39). This gap is anticipated to continue in future years, as shown in the six-year projection from a June 2020 City Council meeting (Exhibit 40). For the 2021-2022 biennium, the City entered a decision-making process to close the gap in a sustainable manner and balance the budget. TPL has borne the impact of some of these financial challenges through staff and service level reductions.

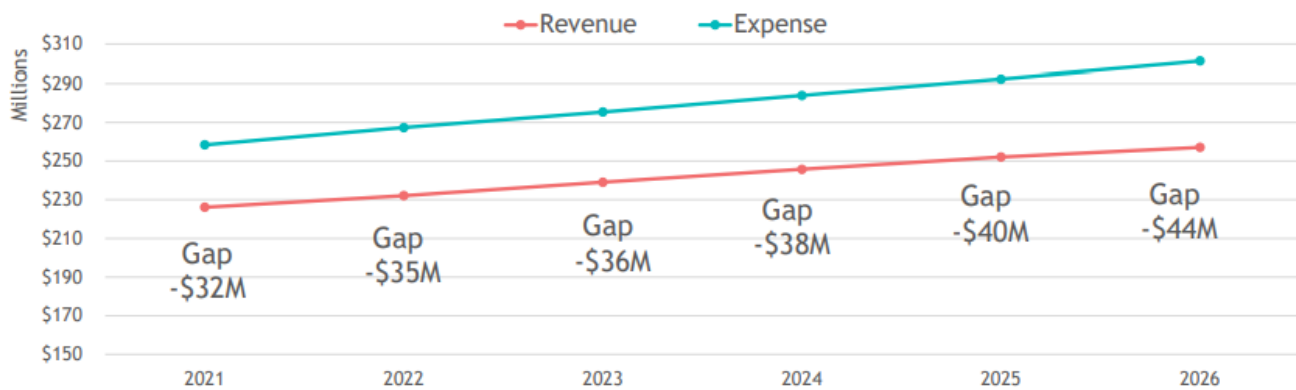
**Exhibit 39. City of Tacoma 2020-2022 General Fund Forecast**



Source: City of Tacoma 2021-2022 Adopted Budget Book



#### Exhibit 40. City of Tacoma 2020 – 2025 General Fund Forecast



Note: Projections were updated between June 2020, shown here, and September 2020, shown in Exhibit 39, due to the monitoring of the economic outlook over the course of the second and third quarters of 2020 and assessing the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the local economy.

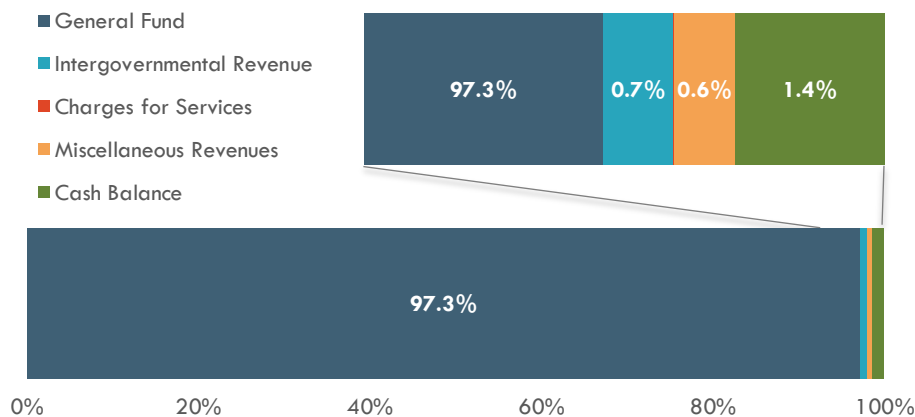
Source: City of Tacoma Budget Update, General Fund Six Year Forecast 2020 – 2025, June 9, 2020 City Council presentation.

### Tacoma Public Library Funding

In the 2021-2022 biennium, the Library has a budget of \$29.4 million and was primarily funded through City General Fund revenues (97.3% of funding) as shown in Exhibit 41. Additional funding comes from:

- Intergovernmental revenue from grants to offset costs and provide internet access to the community (0.7%).
- Charges for services, primarily from non-resident fees and items sold (0.0%).
- Miscellaneous revenue, collected in a special revenue fund, from sales of maps and publications from the Northwest Room, donations, and interest gained from pooled investments (0.6%).
- Cash balance carried from accumulated donations from estates and trusts (1.4%).

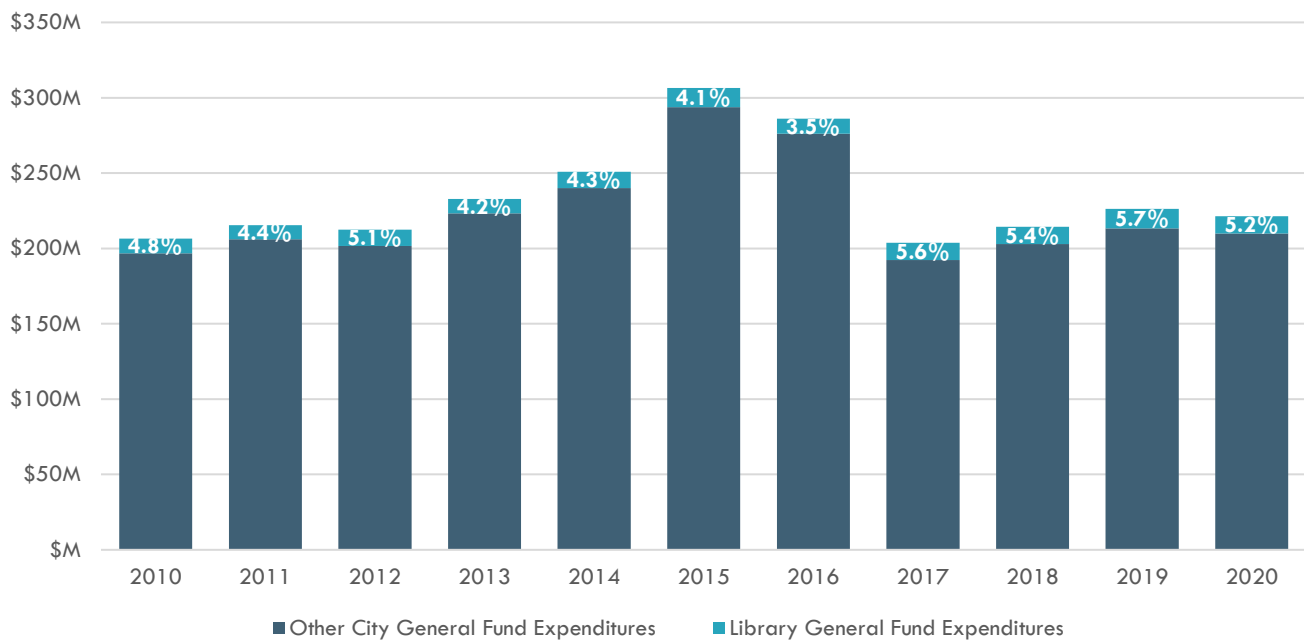
#### Exhibit 41. Library Funding by Category, 2021-2022



Source: City of Tacoma 2021 - 2022 Adopted Budget, BERK 2021.

On average from 2010 to 2020, library funding represented 4.7% of general fund expenditures (Exhibit 42). Because the Library is funded through the City's General Fund, it competes with other City services for funding as revenues fail to keep up with the rising cost of providing current services.

**Exhibit 42. Library General Fund Expenditures as share of Total City General Fund Expenditures, 2010 – 2020**



Source: WA State Auditor's Financial Intelligence Tool, 2010 – 2020, published Sept 20, 2021. BERK 2021.

### Capital Needs

The Library's capital needs are funded through the City's Capital Facilities Program. The 2015-2020 Capital Facilities Plan included \$4.5 million for library building repairs and upgrades, including branch refurbishment to address repairs such as leaks, roof replacements, heat pumps, and exterior repairs. The 2021-2022 Capital Project Summary includes a total of \$2.12 million in capital funding for:

- Kobitech Branch Library roof and furniture replacement (\$162 thousand).
- Library Physical Infrastructure and Building Repairs (\$1.8 million).
- Main Library Elevator Upgrade (\$174 thousand).
- Main Library Fan Wall Replacement (\$275 thousand).

From 2022-2026 the Library anticipates more physical infrastructure and building repairs, as well as a Main Branch Library Improvements Feasibility Study. The full project list includes:

- Library Physical Infrastructure and Building Repairs (\$1.8 million in excess of 2021-2022 appropriation).
- Main Library 1st and 2nd Floor Minor Remodel (\$350 thousand).
- Feasibility Study (\$350 thousand).

## Peer Library Benchmarking

In this analysis TPL is compared to seven Washington State city, county, and regional library systems. These include Tacoma's geographic neighbors in the Puget Sound, as well as libraries serving similar sized populations:

- King County Library System
- Kitsap Regional Library
- Pierce County Library System
- Seattle Public Library
- Sno-Isle Libraries
- Spokane Public Library
- Timberland Regional Library

These library systems were compared using data from the *2020 Washington Public Library Statistical Report*<sup>7</sup> published by the Washington State Library. Because of the significant range in population served among the identified peers, statistics are summarized on a per capita basis where possible. There are limitations to this analysis, as the range of peer libraries in terms of size and services is significant, and what is included in each jurisdictions' operating expenditures may vary. That said, this peer comparison is helpful for providing a standard comparison for public libraries and showing indicators related to TPL's funding levels. A summary of each indicator evaluated in this assessment and TPL's ranking is shown in Exhibit 43, with a standalone exhibit for each measure shown on the following pages.

**Exhibit 43. TPL Expenditures Relative to Regional Peers, 2020**

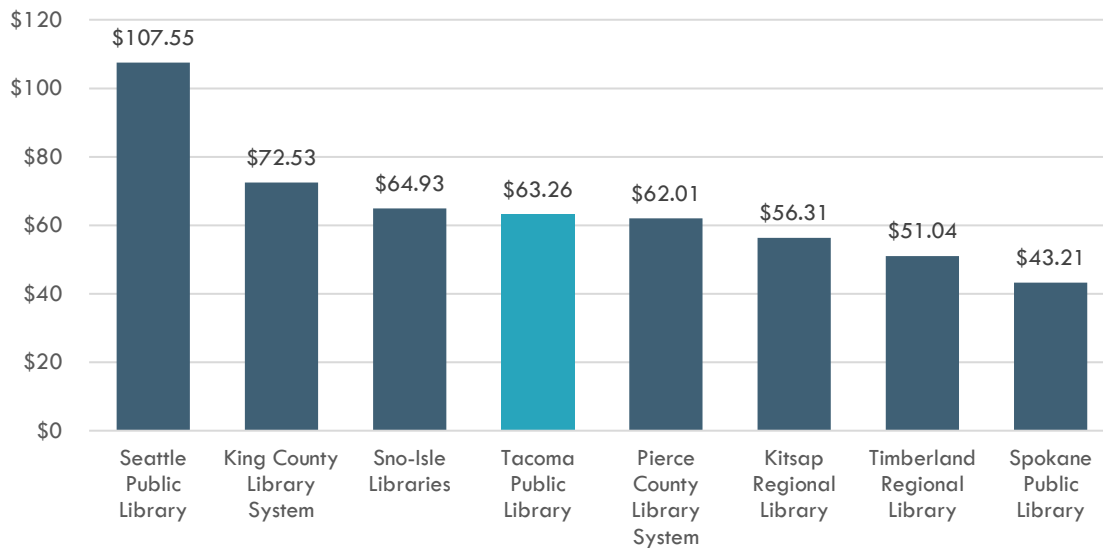
Library	Population Served	Operating Expenditures	Operating Expenditures per Capita	Staff Expenditures per Capita	Collections Expenditures per Capita
King County Library System	1,525,335	\$110.6M	\$72.53	\$48.83	\$7.84
Pierce County Library System	626,950	\$38.9M	\$62.01	\$39.89	\$6.02
Sno-Isle Libraries	783,645	\$50.1M	\$64.93	\$45.33	\$9.06
Seattle Public Library	761,100	\$81.9M	\$107.55	\$80.09	\$12.81
Timberland Regional Library	522,675	\$26.7M	\$51.04	\$32.55	\$6.14
Kitsap Regional Library	272,200	\$14.5M	\$56.31	\$41.82	\$5.48
Spokane Public Library	223,600	\$9.6M	\$43.21	\$30.64	\$4.84
Tacoma Public Library	213,300	\$13.5M	\$63.26	\$40.10	\$4.83
TPL Ranking (of 8)	8	7	4	5	8

Source: Washington Public Library Statistics 2020, BERK 2021

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/libdev/publications.aspx>

Exhibit 44 shows operating expenditures per capita for Tacoma Public Libraries and peer libraries. TPL's operating expenditures per capital are similar to nearby library systems: Pierce County, Sno-Isle, and Kitsap Regional Libraries.

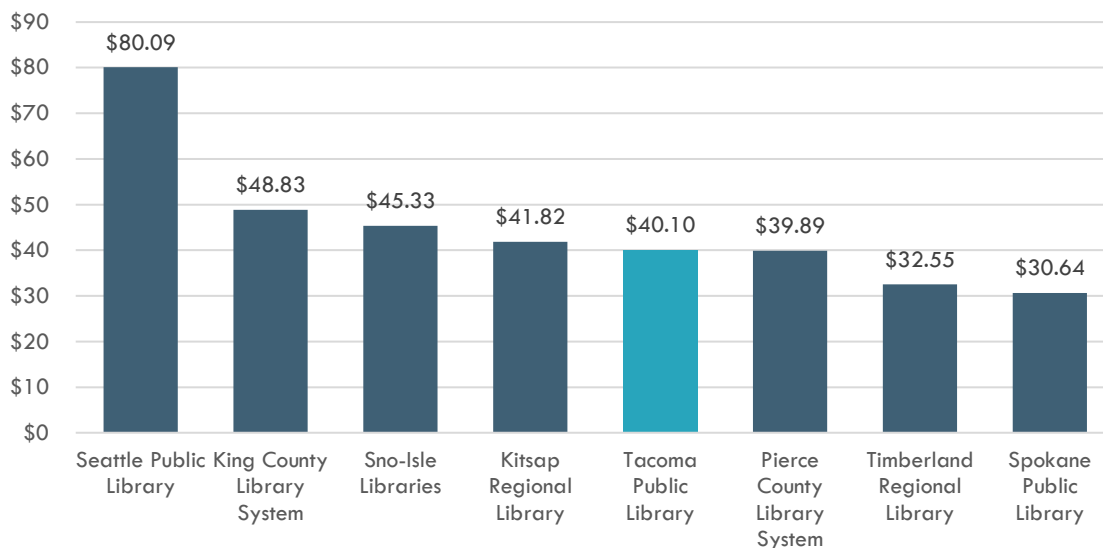
**Exhibit 44. TPL and Peer Jurisdiction Expenditures per Capita, 2020**



Source: Washington Public Library Statistics 2020, BERK 2021.

Exhibit 45 shows staff expenditures per capita. TPL's staff expenditures per capita are relatively similar to other nearby libraries of Pierce County and Kitsap County, but slightly below Sno-Isle.

**Exhibit 45. TPL and Peer Jurisdiction Staff Expenditures per Capita, 2020**

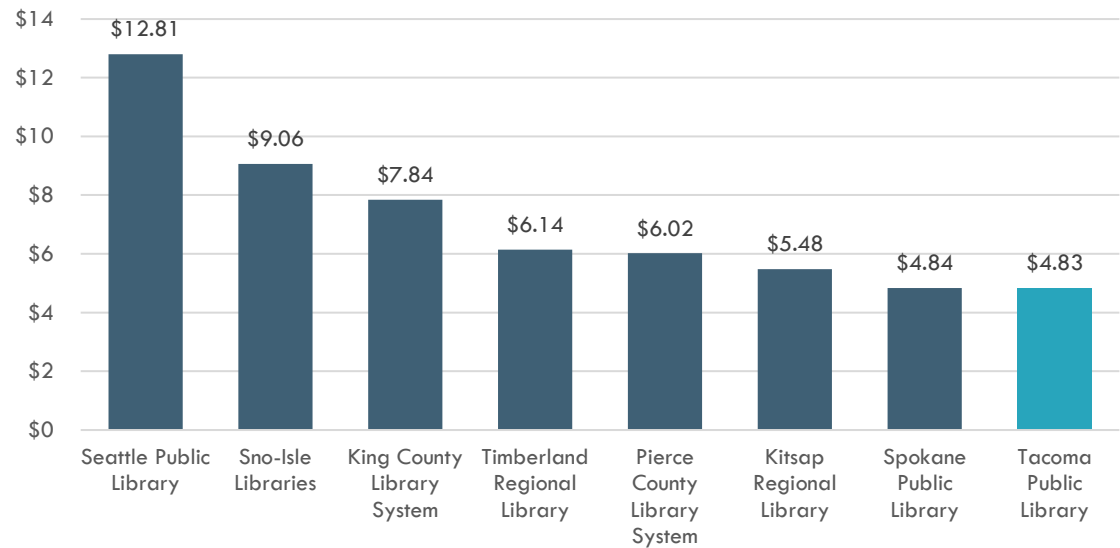


Source: Washington Public Library Statistics 2020, BERK 2021.



Exhibit 46 shows that TPL’s collection expenditures per capita are below those in peer jurisdictions at \$4.83 per Tacoma resident, less than the cost of one paperback book.

**Exhibit 46. TPL and Peer Jurisdiction Collections Expenditures per Capita**



Source: Washington Public Library Statistics 2020, BERK 2021.