WHAT ARE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS?

Neighborhood conservation districts are generally located in residential neighborhoods with a distinct physical character that have preservation or conservation as their primary goal. Although these neighborhoods may not choose to seek designation as a local historic district, or in some cases do not merit such designation, they warrant special land use attention due to their distinctive character and importance as a viable, contributing areas to the community at large. They may include properties in neighborhood commercial centers. However, the emphasis is typically residential.

Accomplished through the adoption of a zoning overlay or independent zoning district, neighborhood conservation districts provide a means to protect character defining streetscapes in older areas threatened by new development or governmental policies that undermine rather than encourage neighborhood preservation. Specific objectives include protecting a viable neighborhood against outside development pressures such as teardowns, parking lots or commercial encroachment. Conservation districts have been established to stabilize existing neighborhoods, increase the supply of affordable housing, and to revitalize close-in neighborhoods.

While individual neighborhood conservation district programs vary from jurisdiction, and a significant number of programs embody attributes of either approach, conservation district programs are often described as falling within one of two categories: the “historic preservation model” or the “neighborhood planning model.” Both types of programs seek to preserve an area’s special character.

(Except from Protecting Older Neighborhoods Through Conservation District Programs by Julia Miller, a National Trust Publication)
Neighborhood Conservation Districts in Tacoma

Wedge Neighborhood Conservation District
The Wedge Neighborhood Conservation District is intended to “buffer” the core historic district from impacts resulting from development in the surrounding area. The Conservation District therefore has fewer design review requirements.

The following projects require Landmarks Preservation Commission review and approval:

- Demolition of an entire building
- Construction of a new building

For more information contact the City of Tacoma
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