To prepare the proposed GTEC program, the City reviewed Tacoma's existing plans and programs that have been approved by the City Council. This section describes the background information that was used to prepare the GTEC program. This information included:

A. Sources of Information

Information	Date Published
City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan, including the Generalized Land Use Element, Housing Element, Transportation Element, Capital Facilities Element, Utilities Element, Recreation and Open Space Facilities Element, Neighborhood Element, Economic Development Element, Downtown element and the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element	Updated 2006
City of Tacoma Capital Facilities Program, 2007-2012	December 19, 2006
Sound Transit 2	April 2007
Pierce Transit – Transit Development Plan 2007-2012	Adopted December 2006
Stakeholder Meetings and Surveys	March 2007

B. Background Information

1. Description of the geographic boundaries

   - The Downtown Tacoma GTEC boundary is the designated Puget Sound Regional Council's Regional Growth Center. Tacoma's "working definition" of downtown is considered an "area of influence." (see Appendix A for map and complete explanation)

2. Documentation that the GTEC is located within the City's urban growth area

   - The Downtown Tacoma GTEC is within the City's jurisdictional limits and includes the area that has been designated as a Regional Growth Center by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

3. Vision for the GTEC

   - The vision for the GTEC is best explained in Destination Downtown, an element of the Comprehensive Plan, which states that the goals for Downtown Tacoma are to develop as a major urban center in the Puget Sound Region. Downtown Tacoma will offer a compact concentration of employment, shopping, educational institutions, entertainment and housing. Destination Downtown outlines the following vision:

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- Downtown Tacoma will be served by a variety of choices in transportation including walking, rail transit, bus transit, automobiles, vanpools, carpools and bicycles.
- Downtown Tacoma will have a safe, convenient, lively and attractive 24-hour environment.
- Downtown Tacoma will provide places to live for various types of households with widely varying income levels.
- Downtown Tacoma will have many forms of publicly accessible open space, such as parks, plazas, waterfront esplanades, tree-lined streets and community gardens.
- Downtown Tacoma will build upon its rich collection of handsome, historic buildings to create an environment of distinctive character and quality.
- Downtown will be a regional destination.

C. Evaluation of Land Use and Transportation Context

1. Existing population and employment

   - In 2004, Downtown Tacoma had a total number of households of 6,702, and a total employment of 38,784.

2. Existing land use conditions

   - The existing land use within the Downtown Tacoma GTEC includes a variety of commercial, industrial and residential uses common to historical downtowns. Under Destination Downtown, Downtown Tacoma is broken up into four districts. They include a Warehouse/Residential District, a Downtown Commercial Core, a Downtown Mixed Use District, and a Downtown Residential District.

   - The zoning for these districts allows for development of a range of high intensity land uses, including office, retail, residential and warehouse/light industrial uses within the downtown area.

   - Major landmark uses within Downtown Tacoma include the University of Washington Tacoma campus, City of Tacoma Municipal offices, Pierce County campus, Tacoma Art Museum, and Washington State History Museum. In the north part of Downtown Tacoma are several theaters.

   - Residential uses are generally concentrated at the north end of Downtown and along the hillside, and are comprised mainly of multi-family development. Current zoning allows residential uses throughout the downtown.

   - Existing development in Downtown Tacoma is generally dense. There are mainly multi-story buildings with off-street parking in garages or structures. Most streets

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have fully developed sidewalks, and some streets have trees and other landscaping.

- There is one public elementary and two public high schools located in the Downtown Tacoma GTEC. There are several secondary and training schools, e.g., Bates Technical College, Evergreen State College, and Everest College.

- Downtown Tacoma includes local and regional bus service, commuter rail, light rail, passenger rail, and intercity bus service. Light rail is operated by Sound Transit and links the different downtown districts to the Tacoma Dome transit hub, which also serves Sounder Commuter Rail to Seattle and a Greyhound bus station. Bus service is provided by Pierce Transit, Intercity Transit and Sound Transit which offer local and commuter service throughout Pierce County, to Seattle, SeaTac, Olympia, the Olympic Peninsula, and the University District in Seattle. Passenger rail is provided by Amtrak.

3. Existing transportation network

- Downtown Tacoma has several highways and arterials that run through the GTEC area. Interstate 5 runs along the southern boundary of the GTEC; and Interstate 705 runs through the eastern portion of the GTEC. State Route 509 runs through the southeastern portion of the GTEC. Arterials include 6th Avenue, 11th Street, 12th Street, 19th Street, South Tacoma Way, Tacoma Avenue South, Market Street, Broadway, Commerce Street, Pacific Avenue and Jefferson Avenue.

- The City of Tacoma has funded the following roadway and non-motorized improvements in the Downtown Tacoma GTEC:

  a. Pedestrian improvements on Pacific Avenue and adjoining east-west streets, including street lights, and pedestrian enhancements;

  b. D Street overpass;

  c. Pedestrian enhancements on D Street and Puyallup Avenue;

  d. Lighting system upgrade within the Central Business District, which is contained in the GTEC area; and

  e. Broadway/St. Helens LID-streetscape improvements to be constructed in 2007-08 (tentatively scheduled).

- <u>Sidewalks / Walkways:</u> Sidewalks are located on almost all streets within the Downtown Tacoma GTEC.

- <u>Bicycle Routes:</u> Downtown Tacoma does not have a bicycle lane network in place. Bicycle lanes are planned with future arterial roadway improvements, and an unfunded bicycle network is a part of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

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- Transit Service: Transit service within the Downtown Tacoma GTEC is provided by Pierce Transit, Intercity Transit and Sound Transit, which operate bus service with local and regional service throughout Pierce County, to Seattle, SeaTac, Olympia, the Olympic Peninsula, and the University District in Seattle. There is a transit center on Commerce Street within Downtown Tacoma. Sound Transit provides Link light rail service between Downtown Tacoma and the Tacoma Dome multimodal station. Intercity bus service is provided by Greyhound.

4. Local and regional economic development plans

- The City has a Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element in the Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2004. Under this element, Downtown Tacoma has the following vision:
  - The downtown center has the highest concentration of urban growth found anywhere in the City. It is the focal point for the city, the center of government, cultural, office, financial, transportation and other activities. This variety of day and night activities attracts visitors from throughout the city and region. The interstate freeway system and major arterials provide access and the center has both local and regional transit connections. Larger, often historic, buildings fronting on the sidewalk characterize the area. Pedestrian orientation is high. Parking is found along the street and within structures.

- There is also a Destination Downtown element last updated in 2001 that includes the vision for the various districts, including the following:
  - *Downtown Commercial Core District:* This district should contain uses and buildings with the greatest intensity and height to produce a concentration of jobs, shops, meeting facilities, entertainment and restaurants within close proximity to each other.
  - *Downtown Residential District:* These areas of downtown should have an emphasis on housing over commercial development. Within the Residential Districts, housing should be high density (in the range of 50 to 100 dwelling units/acre) but should be contained within mid-rise buildings (4-7 stories). Services such as grocery stores and drugstores aimed at local residents should be available, but they should be focused into select locations to provide to a sufficient concentration that can be sustained over time.
  - *Downtown Mixed Use District:* This district is the focus of government and educational services, but should also accommodate retail, office and residential uses.
  - *Warehouse/Residential District:* This district should accommodate a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential uses, with a particular emphasis on workplaces, galleries and dwellings for artists, craftspeople and artisans.

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D. Projected Future Conditions and Characteristics

1. Population and employment growth

- One of the key principles of the Growth Management Act is that jurisdictions must accommodate their fair share of the region's growth. The state Office of Financial Management (OFM) is responsible for projecting each county's population growth over a 20-year period. Based upon these projections, the Act states, "the county and each city within the county shall include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county or city for the succeeding twenty-year period, except for those urban growth areas contained totally within a national historical reserve."

- Projections and Capacity for 2020

  The Downtown Tacoma GTEC is projected to have 46,000 employees in 2020, based on TAZ information that includes the Downtown area.

2. Projected changes in land use types and intensities

- Land Use: Land use in the Downtown Tacoma GTEC is currently devoted primarily to office, retail, residential, government, cultural, entertainment and light industrial uses. Future land use plans for the Downtown Tacoma GTEC envisions higher intensity land uses of the same types, including a mix of office, residential, and commercial uses. Public open space and pedestrian and transit networks are also planned.

3. Forecasts of traffic, delay, mode share, and parking needs

- Projected Intersection Level of Service: The City of Tacoma conducted a traffic forecast for 2025 and projected traffic delay by analyzing level of service at key intersections. Intersection level of service (LOS) is a means of comparing how intersections perform. The intersection LOS is the time that a driver sits at an intersection before proceeding through. In peak hours, drivers may have to sit through more than one change of a traffic light. The level of service ratings are described in the following table:

Intersection Level of Service Description			
Level of Service Rating	Delay per Vehicle at Signal (seconds)	Delay per Vehicle at Unsignalized Intersection (seconds)	Description
A	0-10	0-10	Little or no delay
B	>10-20	>10-15	Short delays
C	>20-30	>15-25	Average delays
D	>35-55	>25-35	Long delays
E	>55-80	>35-50	Very long delays
F	>80	>50	Failure – extreme congestion
Source – Highway Capacity Manual, 2000			

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Individual intersections with a LOS F will be the focus of further evaluation for improvements. The following intersections were modeled using a traffic demand model using 2025 projected conditions, as shown in the following table:

GTEC Area--ADT* Level of Service Analysis								
Intersection	Existing Count	2004 Capacity	LOS**	2025 Volume	2025 Factor	2025 Capacity	LOS**	Rating
Puyallup at E. D Street	14165	43200	0.33	14660	16535	38400	0.43	A
Pacific at S. 26th Street	13153	43200	0.30	30220	15354	38400	0.40	A
Center at Tacoma	7903	33600	0.24	11983	9225	28800	0.32	A
Tacoma at S. 25th	5790	33600	0.17	7988	6759	28800	0.23	A
S. Tac Way at M Street	12151	43200	0.28	15877	14184	38400	0.37	A
S. 21st at Jefferson	14716	28800	0.51	25599	17178	24000	0.72	C
S.19th at Yakima	13031	43200	0.30	20543	15211	38400	0.40	A
S. 15th at Market	7345	33600	0.22	15020	8574	28800	0.30	A
S. 13th at Pacific	9393	25200	0.37	18300	10965	21600	0.51	A
S. 11th at Market	8042	25200	0.32	17700	9388	21600	0.43	A
S. 9th at Tacoma	8701	33600	0.26	16442	10157	28800	0.35	A
6th Ave at Yakima	8919	21600	0.41	15304	10411	19200	0.54	A
Division at MLK	13485	21600	0.62	18917	15741	19200	0.82	D
Stadium at Division	21353	33600	0.64	21054	24926	28800	0.87	D
Schuster Way at 4th	28713	43200	0.66	20147	33518	38400	0.87	D
*Average Daily Traffic								
**Measured as Volume/Capacity Ratio							LOS Rating	
							0-.69	A-B
1.21899442							.691-.79	C
1.115668347							.791-.89	D
1.167331383							.891-.99	E
							.991+	F

- Mode Share Changes: "Mode split" is one generally accepted way of measuring the effectiveness of TDM and other programs that provide alternatives to driving alone. Mode splits compare the percent of commute trips made by ridesharing, bus, walking, or bicycling against trips made by single-occupant vehicles (SOV). The mode split in the Downtown Tacoma GTEC is currently estimated to be 25 percent, which means that nearly one in four commute trips is not made by a SOV. To determine the mode split, the City uses survey data collected by CTR worksites biennially. At CTR worksites, most of the non-SOV trips are accounted for by carpools and alternative work schedules.

2005 - Types of Modes Used in Downtown Tacoma GTEC							
Vanpool	Carpool	Bus	Rail	Bike	Walk	Telework	Other
2%	10%	4%	0%	<1%	1%	1%	6%

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Parking: Parking within Downtown Tacoma is under capacity. The City has started a dialogue with the business community and residents to discuss how to manage the existing amount of on- and off-street parking, while maintaining enough parking for visitors and shoppers. The City Manager led parking discussions will continue through 2007.

4. Identification of jurisdiction plans, policies and capital programs

The following is a list of plan and polices that outline proposed capital programs for the City of Tacoma and Downtown Tacoma GTEC area.

- City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element: The City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan has identified the following projects within the GTEC, that are currently unfunded.

Project Route	Improvement	Sponsoring Agency
6th Avenue at Sprague and Division	Round-about	City of Tacoma
Tacoma Avenue from 6th Street to S 25th Street	Arterial Boulevard Treatment	City of Tacoma
E. 11th Street & Dock Street	Pedestrian Access Project	City of Tacoma
I-5 HOV Lanes	Ramp and Overpass Projects	WSDOT
Pacific Avenue from S. 19th Street to Puyallup Avenue	Nonmotorized Trail	City of Tacoma
Pacific Avenue from S. 9th Street to S. 19th Street	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
E. 11th Street from Broadway Avenue to St. Paul Avenue	Nonmotorized Trail	City of Tacoma
S. 9th Street from Commerce Street to Pacific Avenue	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
S. 19th Street from Sprague Avenue to Martin Luther King, Jr. Way	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
S. 11th Street from Tacoma Avenue to Pacific Avenue	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
Puyallup Avenue from Pacific Avenue to City Boundary	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
Division Avenue from I Street to Tacoma Avenue	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
Commerce Street/Stadium Way/N 1st Street from S. 9th Street to Tacoma Avenue	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
A Street from S. 9th Street to S. 12th Street	Bicycle Lane	City of Tacoma
Yakima Avenue/I Street from Division Avenue to Center Street	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
Tacoma Avenue From 6th Avenue to Center Street	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
St. Helens/Broadway/Jefferson from Center Street to Division	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
6th Avenue from Division Avenue to Tacoma Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
S. 9th Street between Sprague Street and Pacific Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
S. 25th Street between Yakima Avenue and Portland Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma

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S. 19th Street between Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Pacific Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
S. 15th Street between Sprague Avenue and Pacific Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
S. 13th Street between Tacoma Avenue and Pacific Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
S. 12th Street between Sprague Avenue and Tacoma Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
S. 11th Street between Ainsworth Avenue and Tacoma Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
Martin Luther King Jr. Way between S. 19th Street and S. 23rd Street	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
J Street between S. 12th Street and Center Street	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
E. 25th Street between Pacific Avenue and E. G Street	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
Division Avenue between 6th Avenue and I Street	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
Center Street between Pine Street and Tacoma Avenue	Shared Use Path	City of Tacoma
SR 509 (East West Road) between Marine View Drive and Pacific Avenue	Nonmotorized Trail	WSDOT
Tacoma Avenue Overpass at I-5	Bicycle Lane	WSDOT
Yakima Street Overpass at I-5	Bicycle Lane	WSDOT

- Policies in the Transportation Element related to the GTEC include:
  - T-TSM-5 Downtown Parking System: Develop, in partnership with parking stakeholders, a downtown parking system that seeks balance among competing uses, is financially self-supporting, helps attract investment, discourages turning arterial capacity into angle parking spaces, and meets the needs of both private and public users.
  - T-LUT-3 Centers and Corridors: Give high priority to improvement of transportation facilities and services within designated centers and along identified corridors connecting the centers.
  - T-NT-1 Identification of Projects Assign high priority to pedestrian and bicycle projects that serve the following objectives: address safety issues; provide access to designated centers; encourage safe and active routes to schools; provide linkages to the transit, ferry, and school bus systems; complete planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities or trails; and provide system connectivity.

- City of Tacoma Six-Year Capital Facilities Program: includes improvements to the following roads in the Downtown Tacoma GTEC area, including the following:
  - Pedestrian improvements on Pacific Avenue, including street lights, and pedestrian enhancements;
  - Lighting system upgrade within the Central Business District, which is contained in the GTEC area.

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- Sound Transit's Ten-Year Regional Transit Plan ("Sound Transit 2"): Sound Transit's Phase 2 Plan includes the following projects that would impact the Downtown Tacoma GTEC:
  - Light Rail Extension: From Sea-Tac Airport through Des Moines and Federal Way to the Port of Tacoma area and the Tacoma Dome Station. This connects Pierce County to the regional light rail system.
  - Extension of Sounder commuter rail from Tacoma to Lakewood.

- Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID): The RTID package includes the following projects near the Downtown Tacoma GTEC:
  - I-5 to Tacoma Mall: Builds direct southbound ramp from I-5 to Tacoma Mall Blvd. near the Tacoma Mall to improve traffic flow on I-5 and local city streets.
  - SR 167 Puyallup to Tacoma: Provides new north-south alternative to I-5 by connecting SR 167 where it currently dead ends in Puyallup to SR 509 at the Port of Tacoma. Improves traffic and freight mobility, and accommodates port expansion and economic development.

- Pierce Transit: The following planned service improvements for the Downtown Tacoma area are included in Pierce Transit's Strategic Business Plan:
  - Provide More Frequent Service from Gig Harbor to Downtown Tacoma: In conjunction with the imposition of tolls on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, additional trips will be added to existing express linkages between Purdy/Gig Harbor and Downtown Tacoma. This may include limited midday service, later evening service or reverse commute trips. (Included in Pierce Transit's 6-Year Transit Development Plan)
  - Formation of a single trunk route service linking Downtown Tacoma, East Tacoma and Lakewood.
  - Formation of a trunk route operating every 15 minutes on weekdays and 30 minutes on weekends operating along South Tacoma Way between Downtown Tacoma and the Tacoma Mall and continuing to Lakewood via Oaks and Steilacoom Blvd. (Included in Pierce Transit's 6-Year Transit Development Plan)
  - Transit Signal Priority: Six of Pierce Transit's major transit corridors are outfitted with signal priority treatments, providing significant travel time savings and reducing operating costs. Building on past successes, Phase I of a downtown Tacoma transit priority project that will provide priority treatments in Downtown Tacoma is already underway. Phase II of the downtown Tacoma TSP Project is scheduled for implementation in 2009.
  - Downtown Tacoma Circulator Route: Expand Route 26 (M.L. King Jr. Way) to link Upper Tacoma with the Tacoma Dome Station and the 9th & Commerce Link stop, operating on a schedule that is coordinated with Link (10-minutes

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on weekdays). This would provide a connection between Upper Tacoma employment sites and the Tacoma Dome Station as well as providing improved service between Upper Tacoma and the Downtown District.

- Route 5 – East Tacoma/72nd Street: Begin a new trunk route that combines routes 41 and 202, offering 15-minute headways between Downtown Tacoma and Lakewood via Portland Ave and 72nd Street. This route is identified in Pierce Transit's Strategic Business Plan and would provide valuable transportation links that are not fully served today.
- Frederickson –Tacoma Express Service: Begin commute-hour express service linking Frederickson with Downtown Tacoma via Canyon Road. This route, which is included in Pierce Transit's Strategic Business Plan, would provide commute access to Tacoma's central business district for South County residents. It would depend upon a new park-and-ride facility in the Mid-county area (identified above) as an anchor.
- Service along Ruston Way: Begin a new route linking Downtown Tacoma with Point Defiance via Ruston Way. This frequently requested service is included in Pierce Transit's Strategic Business Plan. It would provide transit service along Tacoma's waterfront, offering the potential to reduce auto congestion in this busy corridor.

- PSRC's Destination 2030 - The Tacoma area related transportation projects identified in Destination 2030 and earmarked for future funding include:
  - High Capacity Transit on I-5,
  - Bicycle improvements and arterial improvements on Pacific Highway South near Port of Tacoma Road
  - Shared use path on Puyallup Avenue
  - Bicycle commuter station at the Tacoma Dome
  - Shared use path along the Water Ditch Trail
  - 19th Street Signal Priority Enhancements
  - 6th Avenue Signal Priority Enhancements
  - SR 99 Transit Priority Enhancements at the Tacoma Dome
  - Tacoma Dome rail station, including 1,200 parking stall expansion
  - Tacoma Dome Station Access Signal Priority Enhancements
  - I-5 improvements, including Core HOV lanes, interchange improvements, ITS, enhanced transit
  - Direct access ramp from I-5 to the Tacoma Dome
  - SR 167 extension to connect to I-5 at the Port of Tacoma

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E. Gap Analysis

The City of Tacoma has made significant investment in its Downtown. However, there are gaps that continue to exist that may prevent the City from being successful in reducing drive alone trips in the Downtown area. The following is a description of the barriers:

1. Transit & Vanpool Services

   Downtown is currently served by Pierce Transit, Intercity Transit and Sound Transit. Pierce Transit operates fixed route and vanpool services that connect commuters to various locations in Pierce County. Intercity Transit operates express and vanpool services that link Downtown Tacoma with Thurston County. Sound Transit currently operates Sounder and Link Light Rail transit service.
   Analysis will include examining underserved areas and service provision gaps that could be improved.

2. Parking Policies and Management

   One of the barriers for achieving successful reductions in drive alone travel is the lack of comprehensive parking management for both on-street and off-street. Currently, parking is free at many work sites and most sites have little or no capacity constraints. (Some work sites have paid parking.) Because of these parking conditions, commuters are encouraged to drive alone rather than look for alternative travel options.

3. Subsidies for Transit and Ridesharing

   With the exception of CTR-affected work sites, most of the work sites do not offer subsidies for their employees for transit and ridesharing activities. Subsidies for transit and ridesharing would help increase participation for these activities.

4. Lack of Awareness for Travel Alternatives

   With the exception of employees who work at CTR-affected work sites, there is some lack of awareness for commute alternatives among employees and residents in Downtown. To increase awareness of transit and ridesharing services, Pierce Transit is now marketing and promoting these services to small employers. The City could enhance these efforts by marketing and promoting these services to additional small employers and residents.

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