



TO: Hyun Kim, City Manager
FROM: Vice Chair Joe Bushnell
COPY: Economic Development Committee; Debbie Bingham, Committee Executive Liaison
PRESENTER: Vice Chair Joe Bushnell
SUBJECT: Tacoma Minimum Wage Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report
DATE: June 30, 2026

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Vice Chair Joe Bushnell will present his Tacoma Minimum Wage Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report. The purpose of this outreach was to create space for honest conversations and gather candid feedback from a broad range of stakeholders across Tacoma to better understand how different parts of our community view this issue and ensure the Tacoma City Council had the benefit of hearing from those with lived experience and expertise before considering potential policy changes. The report provides an overview of economic conditions in the City of Tacoma, key themes from stakeholders, and stakeholder policy recommendations.

BACKGROUND:

Tacoma residents have long expressed a desire for higher minimum wages. In 2015, Tacoma voters passed an initiative to raise the City’s minimum wage above the state’s minimum wage. This set the City’s minimum wage to \$12 per hour by 2018 through three phases (Washington state minimum wage was \$9.47 per hour). In 2016, Washington voters approved Initiative 1433, which further raised the state minimum wage above the City of Tacoma’s and now Tacoma once again defers to the state’s minimum wage.

Many municipalities in Washington state have since raised their minimum wages higher than the state’s. These minimum wages increase annually based on specific federal consumer price index adjustments. In 2025, a citizen’s initiative seeking to raise the City’s minimum wage to \$20 per hour was filed with the City Clerk’s office. That initiative did not ultimately reach the ballot, and there are ongoing court proceedings to determine how it is resolved.

Vice Chair Bushnell wanted to continue the minimum wage discussion. He identified key stakeholder groups and held or attended round table conversations. The report outlines feedback from the following stakeholders: labor unions, nonprofits, local and small businesses, healthcare industry, Tacoma’s Anchor Network, childcare providers, and students.

ISSUE:

For years, Tacoma residents have engaged in conversations about what fair wages mean for workers, families, employers, and the overall health of our local economy. As interest in this issue continued to grow in changing the City’s minimum wage, Vice Chair Bushnell recognized the importance of hearing directly from the people and organizations who would be most affected by any future decisions. Vice Chair Bushnell created this report to assist his peers in understanding the broad range of impacts minimum wage policy changes have across the City of Tacoma. This information is intended to inform Council Member discussion when Vice Chair Bushnell leads a minimum wage policy discussion at the Economic Development Committee meeting on July 14, 2026.



ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.