

# CITY OF TACOMA 2021 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

### **Together, We Will Change**

The City hopes to work together in partnership with the Legislature to advance reforms that address the disparate impacts of systems and institutions on communities of color. As part of this, the City calls on the Legislature to advance criminal justice transformation policies to provide greater safety for communities that historically have not been well-served by existing systems. The City finds the following reforms of great importance:

- Ensure an independent investigation and prosecution occurs on incidents involving fatal use-of-force and deaths that occur in police custody.
- Revise the statewide standard for police use-of-force and establish a statewide database of police use of force incidents.
- Create a database to track police officer misconduct and removal.
- Reform the decertification process to improve oversight and accountability.
- Establish an officer duty to intervene and report misconduct or illegal activity.
- Prohibit officers from resigning in lieu of any investigation.
- Reform the arbitration process to enhance the ability for agencies to dismiss officers who are not helpful to the agency's mission or betray the public's trust.
- Enable local jurisdictions to effectively deploy body and dash cameras.

The City is taking immediate action to implement local transformation and asks that statewide solutions honor stronger and more robust local policies.

### **Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic as Partners**

All levels of government must work together to find solutions to the budgetary challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Legislature grapples with how to address the state revenue shortfall, the City encourages and supports the state in identifying progressive revenue sources. The City asks that cuts are not made to revenues shared with local governments, and that the State consider revenue replacement and/or revenue tools for local agencies facing significant shortfalls.

### **Northwest ICE Processing Center**

The City shares concerns expressed by the Tacoma community for the health, safety, and welfare of detainees held in the Northwest ICE Processing Center, a privately owned and operated immigration detention facility. The City has called for the release of everyone and the closure of business at the NWDC due to public health risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to pushing for changes to federal immigration policy, the City supports efforts at the state level to eliminate privately operated detention centers as an immigration enforcement option in Washington State. If elimination of these facilities is not possible, the City supports intermediary efforts to bring transparency, accountability, and the protection from disease outbreak of all detained in the facility.

### **Affordable Housing & Homelessness**

The City adopted an Affordable Housing Action Strategy that has an ambitious goal of creating 6,000 new units of affordable housing by 2028. The City remains highly concerned for the housing stability of our residents, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The City requests:

- Foreclosure and eviction prevention, including funding for mortgage, rental, and utility assistance
- Local option funding tools dedicated to affordable housing
- Flexibility to utilize mental health sales tax revenues for capital purposes and for existing programs so that service providers can achieve the desired community outcomes
- Ensure that reforms to the multi-family property tax exemption (MFTE) incentivizes increased housing units in the urban core
- State funding for affordable housing projects, including fully funding the state Housing Trust Fund and allocating state matching funds for local housing trust funds

### **Transportation Investments**

The City encourages the Legislature to adopt a transportation revenue package to ensure on-time delivery of projects funded in Connecting Washington, and to make much needed investments in transportation. The City encourages the Legislature to identify stable revenue sources that recognize the impact of the transportation system on climate change. Below are the City's transportation priorities:

- On-time delivery of key regional investments, including the extension of light rail from Federal Way to Tacoma and the completion of the Puget Sound Gateway (SR 509/167).
- Local funding and/or enhanced local option tools for cities to meet local street maintenance needs. The City's street maintenance backlog for pavement alone is approximately four times the size of its annual budget.
- \$180 million to complete the replacement of Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge, a deteriorating bridge that provides access to the west side of the Port of Tacoma. The new bridge will improve safety, freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian access, and fish habitat.
- \$9 million as a state match to the Puyallup Avenue Complete Streets Project to better accommodate vehicles, freight, bicycles, pedestrian, and transit.
- Funding for HOV lanes on I-5 from 38<sup>th</sup> to Joint Base Lewis McChord to provide a completed HOV system through Tacoma.
- \$650,000 to complete phase two of an access revision report to improve access from I-5 into the Tacoma Mall subarea, envisioned to become an urban center for housing and mixed-use development.
- Funding for trail investments, including the SR 167 Tacoma-Puyallup Trail, Prairie Line Trail, and Schuster Parkway Promenade.

### **Links to Opportunity Project**

The City requests \$3 million in funding for the Links to Opportunity project welcome the Tacoma Link to the Hilltop neighborhood. This project was developed after a lengthy community involvement process with the Hilltop community, identifying improvements to Hilltop to ensure the neighborhood is safe and accessible as Link light rail is extended. The Hilltop neighborhood is one of Tacoma's oldest historically Black neighborhoods that has been

underserved by public and private investment. These improvements would include lighting, street furniture, art from local artists, and bike/pedestrian access. The total cost of the project is \$10.3 million – the project is fully funded apart from the \$3 million requested.

## COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The City of Tacoma recognizes that a thriving community requires strong communication, collaboration, and innovation with our partners. The Tacoma Anchor Institutions Network is comprised of organizations rooted in Tacoma that have joined together to advance common goals to build community wealth, resilience, and improve opportunities for all. The collective priorities of the Anchors are aligned with the community-crafted Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan. We are pleased to join community organizations in asking for your assistance with the following:

### **Pierce Transit:**

- Preserve the remaining \$11.9M allocated for Pierce Transit’s first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line from the 2015 Connecting Washington transportation package. These dollars complete Pierce Transit’s local match for the project, leveraging \$75M in federal funding to be reprogrammed back to our local economy in support of local, family-wage jobs.
- Identify a new, sustainable, statewide public transportation funding solution. An effective revenue tool will protect existing sources of public transportation revenue while incorporating new and innovative funding models to ensure the stability and reliability of equitable public transportation in Washington State.

### **Tacoma Housing Authority:**

- Allocate \$2 million per year indefinitely to the operations of Tacoma Housing Authority’s Arlington Drive Campus to serve youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. This funding was allocated in 2019 and was intended to become a permanent base-line budget investment.

### **Metro Parks Tacoma:**

- Approve legislation that streamlines childcare licensing processes and strengthen the ability to leverage existing public infrastructure and expertise in the childcare sector.
- Allocate \$500,000 in the capital budget to redevelop Gas Station Park in the Sound End. This park is in an underserved portion of the city for Metro Parks Tacoma’s 10-Minute Walk service goal, which aims to place a park within a 10-minute walk of every resident’s home in Tacoma.

### **Port of Tacoma:**

- Allocate \$3.15 million in Department of Ecology Remedial Action Grants to the Port of Tacoma to clean up the Alexander Avenue Tank Farm (\$1.15 million) and the Arkema Manufacturing (\$2 million) properties.

### **South Sound Housing Affordability Partners:**

- The City will coordinate efforts on attainable housing with the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners, a coalition of elected officials representing Pierce County, various South Sound cities, and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians who are committed to fostering housing stability

and attainability in our communities.

### **Higher Education**

- Allocate funding to construct Milgard Hall – an innovation-focused academic building that will house the University’s new mechanical and civil engineering programs to provide access to high-demand STEM careers for place-bound Sound residents. The building will also expand the Milgard School of Business and the Global Innovation and Design Lab.
- Preserve funding for community and technical colleges, including Tacoma Community College and Bates Technical College.

### **Tacoma Public Schools**

Allow flexibility in the student enrollment county process so that districts can maintain adequate instructional and support staffing throughout the year. Revise the student transportation funding statute by providing flexibility during emergencies and compensate districts for the actual costs of providing this service. Allow for priority grantmaking for community partner agencies to provide supports and enhanced learning opportunities for youth. Provide funding flexibility in the prototypical school model allowing districts to increase the funding for school support staff, such as homeless liaisons/social workers, psychologists, and other needed supports—at least for high-poverty school districts.

### **Additional Support/Oppose/Monitor Legislative Issues for General Government**

#### **Climate Justice**

*Clean Transportation:* The City supports a clean fuel standard and policies that encourage more fuel-efficient and alternative-fuel vehicles and fuels.

*Clean Buildings:* The City supports policies and investments that reduce the carbon intensity of new and existing buildings, including expanding energy efficiency, green building standards, upgrades to public buildings, and other measures.

*Culvert and Stormwater Funding:* The City supports state investments in local culvert and stormwater projects to improve fish passage and water quality.

#### **Community & Economic Development**

*Economic Development Tools:* The City supports expanded and new economic development tools, including expanding commercial office space development tools, authorizing increment financing, and other proposals.

*Green Economy and Growth:* The City supports legislation that will develop green jobs including in urban forestry growth, renewable energy growth, natural storm water infrastructure, urban farming, and green technology development, making sure that these jobs are promoted within highly vulnerable communities. The City supports legislation that helps prevent waste and creates opportunities for reuse and recycling markets. The City supports the establishment of a statewide industrial waste coordination program to provide expertise, technical assistance, and best practices to support local industrial symbiosis projects.

## **Public Works**

*Interstate-5 Corridor:* The Washington State Department of Transportation has leading the I-5 System Partnership to identify improvements along I-5 from Marysville to Tumwater. The City supports advancing the work of the I-5 System Partnership, and asks that I-5 crossings, especially pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, be prioritized as part of the partnership.

*Automated License Plate Reader Technology:* The City supports legislation that regulates automated license plate reader technology but will oppose provisions that would negatively impact the City's parking enforcement program.

*Bicycle Signals:* The City supports proposals to allow the use of bicycle signals in state law. The federal government has allowed use of signals which use a bicycle symbol instead of a circular ball or arrow. However, Washington defines a signal as being a circular ball or arrow, which means other shapes (i.e. a bicycle symbol) cannot be used.

*Expanded Authorization for Speed Cameras:* The City of Tacoma currently has the only speed camera, located on Bay Street in a location that saw a high number of speed-related fatalities prior to the imposition of the technology. The City is interested in utilizing this technology in other high safety risk areas of the state.

*Expand Use of Automated Enforcement Surrounding Schools:* Public Works staff are working with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission on authorization to expand use of automated enforcement surrounding schools from the current limits of the school speed zone immediately around a school to the school walk area. This would allow reduced police presence around our schools and would remove some of the possibility for racial bias in enforcement. The City supports requests from the Cooper Jones Active Transportation Safety Advisory Council to allow greater use of automated enforcement tools around schools.

*Passenger-Only Ferry Service:* The City supports initiatives that help bring passenger-only ferry service to Tacoma. Puget Sound Regional Council is currently completing a study on passenger-only ferry services, and the Seattle-Tacoma route satisfied all of the initial study metrics and is being further evaluated for feasibility.

## **Public Safety/Criminal Justice**

*Hate Crimes Database:* The City of Tacoma supports the efforts of the State LGBTQ Commission to create a statewide hate crimes database.

*Sentencing Reform:* The City of Tacoma supports revisions to criminal sentencing that reduce that state prison population, especially the disproportionate number of people of color, maintain community safety, and decrease recidivism. Further, the City supports sentencing reform for possession of a controlled substance for personal use such that the offense is no longer a felony under state law. The City encourages the state to prioritize funding for

education around substance use disorders and treatment so that impacted individuals can receive necessary services as an alternative to incarceration.

*Firearms:* The City will monitor legislation regulating firearms or other proposals to curb gun violence.

*Jail Standards:* The City supports revising the state's standardized requirements of care to ensure the health and safety of individuals in custody of the criminal justice system.

### **Tacoma Venues and Events**

*Online Ticket Sales:* The City joins other venue operators in opposing legislative proposals that negatively impact the City's ability to sell tickets to events at the Tacoma Dome safely and efficiently through the City's current provider, Ticketmaster.

### **Finance**

*State-shared Revenues:* The City supports efforts to protect and enhance state-shared revenues, including liquor taxes, marijuana taxes, and the criminal justice assistance account.

*Local Tax and Licensing Authority:* The City opposes legislative proposals that restrict the City's authority to impose a local business and occupation (B&O) tax and business license requirements.

*Transportation Network Companies:* The City supports statewide regulation of transportation network companies that establishes a regulatory structure that is similar to or more stringent than the City's existing regulations, , but retaining City authority to continue collecting trip fees from TNC's to contribute to a wheelchair accessible vehicle program in Tacoma.

*Comprehensive Property Tax Levy Reform:* The City supports comprehensive property tax levy reform that aligns with growth and inflation to allow the city and other local agencies to provide adequate services to the community. For example, in 1982, Tacoma residents approved a permanent property tax levy for fire/EMS at \$0.50 per \$1,000. However, the 1% cap calculation continually diminishes the rate the approved rate, requiring the City to ask voters to re-approve the levy several times. This causes confusion amongst voters as they struggle to understand why the same levy needs to be approved repeatedly. The City would ask that the levy calculation be changed so that it could maintain its levy rate of \$0.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

### **Planning**

*Local Control over Zoning:* The City opposes any proposal that preempts local land use authority, including proposals mandating zoning or regulations changes regarding single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, or accessory dwelling units.

*Growth Management Act (GMA) Reform:* The City supports reforms to the GMA that further facilitate growth within urban centers, integrates planning for climate change, and provides

dedicated planning funding to local jurisdictions to implement any new policies or responsibilities.

### **Neighborhood & Community Services**

*Homeless Encampments:* The City will monitor any legislation to change or enforce policies addressing homeless encampments on public right-of-way. Additionally, the City will continue to implement the budget proviso language directing WSDOT/City of Tacoma to conduct a pilot program to address homeless encampments.

*Programs Supporting Vulnerable Populations:* The City of Tacoma supports funding for programs that serve our most vulnerable populations, including the Housing & Essential Needs (HEN) and Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD).

*Aging- friendly Policies:* The City of Tacoma supports proposals that seek to improve quality of life for seniors in our communities, such as providing opportunities for aging residents to age in place, rather than being placed in a long-term care facility.

*Housing Justice Act:* The City of Tacoma supports legislation that would ban discrimination against renters based on a prior criminal record.

### **Emergency Management**

*Structural Reform of the State's Emergency Management:* The City supports a review of the state's governance and funding of emergency management. The City encourages the exploration of making the Emergency Management Division (EMD) a separate cabinet-level department within state government, rather than a division within the Military Department. The current model results in duplication of effort, delays, and inconsistent coordination with local governments and creates inefficiencies.

### **Tacoma Public Libraries**

*Firearms in Public Spaces:* Tacoma Public Libraries opposes legislation that would require library employees to enforce regulations prohibiting firearms in public spaces.

*Challenges to Intellectual Freedom:* Tacoma Public Libraries opposes legislation that restricts intellectual freedom.

*Protecting Library Workers:* Tacoma Public Libraries supports protecting library employees in the same manner as all public sector employees (RCW 9A.36.031).

## TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

### **Tacoma Power**

*Carbon reduction policies:* Washington lawmakers have indicated that they will continue to focus on legislative solutions aimed at decarbonizing Washington State's economy. TPU will actively engage in and seek to support proposals that decarbonize the economy at reasonable costs to customers and that appropriately acknowledge and credit hydropower as a carbon-free generating resource and align with existing and emerging regional organized markets.

*Support investment in electric transportation infrastructure and programs that advance the development of clean fuels:* TPU will support additional funding for electric transportation infrastructure and programs that advance the development and production of clean fuels.

*Support equal treatment of hydropower:* Tacoma Power customers have invested in renewable, carbon-free hydroelectric generating facilities for decades. These facilities will continue to require significant reinvestment to ensure their future safe and reliable operation. During the 2019 Legislative Session, other renewable generating resources were given special tax treatment. TPU will continue to advocate for consistent tax treatment or alternative approaches that support equal treatment of all renewable, carbon-free resources.

### **Tacoma Water**

*Support the Public Works Trust Fund:* More than 6.2 million Washington State residents, 85 percent of the state's population, get their drinking water from public water systems. Nationally, \$472 billion needs to be invested over the next 20 years to support a resilient system and keep up with aging water infrastructure. The Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) is a crucial funding program for many communities around our state providing low-interest loans to help maintain vital public infrastructure. TPU supports public water systems and city partners in their request to fully restore and protect existing funding of the PWTF.

### **Tacoma Rail**

*Support Loan Request for East End Locomotive Facility and Track Maintenance:* The State of Washington administers both a grant program and a loan program designed to support freight rail capital needs. Tacoma Rail has applied for three projects under the Freight Rail Infrastructure Bank (Loan Program). If awarded, the funds would be used to help update the East End Locomotive Facility as well as proactively rehabilitate two segments of our track.