



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

**TO:** Mayor & City Council  
**FROM:** Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh and Council Assistant Lynda Foster  
**COPIES TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Kurtis Kingsolver, Deputy City Manager; Bill Fosbre, City Attorney  
**SUBJECT:** **Resolution - International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism - December 13, 2020**  
**DATE:** Dec 7, 2022

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**I ask for your support for a Resolution** directing the City Manager to have the City of Tacoma's Office of Equity and Human Rights adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism for the City of Tacoma.

**LEGISLATIVE INTENT:**

**Background:**

On 26 May 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Plenary decided to adopt the following nonlegally binding working definition of antisemitism<sup>1</sup>:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a crucial first step in addressing the horrific rise in antisemitism, especially in Europe and the United States. The Working Definition is a clear and compact description of antisemitism in its various forms, including Holocaust denial, prejudices against Jews, and the denial of Israel's right to exist. The Definition sends a message that governments understand the threat, which is the obvious first step in addressing it. American Jewish Committee (AJC) was involved in the original drafting of the definition 14 years ago and continues to urge governments to adopt it.

AJC is encouraging local, state, regional and national bodies to endorse the use of the Working Definition as a valuable educational tool to identify and combat antisemitism. As of August 2022, 28 states and the District of Columbia, either through proclamation, executive order, or legislation, are using or have recognized the importance of the IHRA definition. On Oct. 3, 2022, The City of Bellevue officially recognized the definition of antisemitism<sup>2</sup>. Bellevue is the first city in the Pacific Northwest to adopt this type of proclamation, which is used in many other cities around the globe.

**Resolution Request:**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ajc.org/the-working-definition-of-antisemitism>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/bellevue-adopts-proclamation-defining-antisemitism/ZPIZF6W7LVCKXAPJQIOGHYNU7I/>

This resolution directs the City Manager to have the City of Tacoma’s Office of Equity and Human Rights adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism for the City of Tacoma as a tool to identify and combat antisemitism.

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: December 20, 2022

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):**

Representatives from the American Jewish Committee (AJC) requested the City of Tacoma adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. CM Rumbaugh shared the proposal with leaders at Temple Beth El and other leaders in the Tacoma Jewish community.

**2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**Equity and Accessibility:**

Each year, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Center on Extremism tracks incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism and assault in the United States. Since 1979 we have published this information in an annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents. In 2021, ADL tabulated 2,717 antisemitic incidents across the United States. This represents a 34% increase from the 2,026 incidents recorded in 2020 and is the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.<sup>3</sup> This report highlights the high rates of incidents in Washington state in both 2020 and 2021. Adopting the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism provides a tool to identify and combat antisemitism in Tacoma.

**Civic Engagement:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

**Livability:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s)?

The Definition sends a message that governments understand the threat, which is the obvious first step in addressing it. Adopting this definition for the City of Tacoma shows our community that their public institutions are committed to addressing antisemitism and creating a welcoming environment for people of all faiths and backgrounds, including our Jewish community.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. Take no action		Does not acknowledge impacts of antisemitism on our community
2. Adopt a different definition	Provides local community the chance to engage with and own the definition	Would not be in partnership with the international community

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.adl.org/audit2021>

**EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:**

The City of Tacoma’s Office of Equity and Human Rights adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism for the City of Tacoma as a tool to identify and combat antisemitism.

**SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Sponsors recommend adopting this resolution to make it clear what the City means when it says Tacoma is opposed to antisemitism.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact.

**If you have a question related to the Council Contingency Fund Request, please contact Lynda Foster at 253.591.5166 or Lynda.Foster@CityofTacoma.org.**

**SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY:**   
Council Member Rumbaugh

**SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS SIGNATURES (2 SIGNATURES ONLY)**

(Signatures demonstrate support to initiate discussion and consideration of the subject matter by City Council for potential policy development and staff guidance/direction.)

1.  POS# Mayor

2.  POS# 7

**Mayor’s initials** 

(Mayor’s initials for awareness only to ensure alignment and coordination of emergent policies.)