



TO: Hyun Kim, City Manager
FROM: Jeff H. Capell, Hearing Examiner *JHC*
Troy Stevens, Senior Real Estate Specialist, Public Works Real Property Services *tas*
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance No. 25-0825 – Street Vacation No. 124.1459 – October 7, 2025
DATE: September 15, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

An ordinance vacating a segment of South 19th Street from Market Street to Jefferson Avenue, to allow for future growth and development of the University of Washington Tacoma campus.

BACKGROUND:

The Hearing Examiner's recommendation is based on the evidence and testimony presented as part of a public hearing held on July 24, 2025. The Vacation Area (as defined by the Hearing Examiner's Report and Recommendation) is a segment of South 19th Street from Market Street to Jefferson Avenue. The Board of Regents of the University of Washington ("UWT"), the Petitioner here, requested the vacation to allow for future growth and development of the University of Washington Tacoma campus. The City of Tacoma Public Works Traffic Engineering division has determined that the Vacation Area could be vacated without any material adverse effect on the City's right-of-way system, and therefor the Vacation Area is not needed for continued present, or future public use as right-of-way.

The Petitioner has requested a waiver of the usual requirement to pay compensation for release of the City's right-of-way interest. The City's internal assessment of the vacation compensation (if waiver is not approved) is determined to be approximately \$733,562 dollars. City staff opposed the waiver at the hearing. While the Examiner is recommending approval of the street vacation, his recommendation does not include any recommendation as to granting or denying the waiver request. Under the express language in TMC 9.22.010, the Examiner does not see any clear authority to recommend approval or denial of waiver requests as such a recommendation would carry with it financial/budgetary consideration that are beyond his authority. **Given the aforementioned information, the City Council will need to separately decide whether to grant or deny the waiver request.**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

A public hearing was held on July 24, 2025, at which members of the community could attend and speak to express their concerns, opposition, and/or support for the proposed vacation. No members of the public appeared at the hearing. The vacation will benefit both the public and the Petitioner because it facilitates the growth and development of the UWT campus, a public educational institution. Additionally, the Petitioner intends to make a "commons" greenspace in the Vacation Area, which would benefit students, faculty, and Tacomans in general, as this area is intended to be open for public use/enjoyment.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

The primary positive impact on equity, equality, diversity, or inclusion that could result from approving this vacation would be the eventual realization of the Petitioner's intended growth and development of the UWT campus, which would result in expanding public educational opportunities that benefit the community.

Economy/Workforce: Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity

Increase the number of infrastructure projects and improvements that support existing and new business developments.



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

The expansion of the UWT's existing campus improves and benefits the community through access to greater educational opportunities and improved public education facilities.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. The Council could approve the vacation petition under conditions different than those recommended.	Any positive impacts arising from different conditions would depend on what those conditions are.	Different conditions could require an additional hearing with different findings and conclusions than are present now to support them.
2. The Council could deny the vacation petition.	The most positive impacts come from approving the vacation. Denial maintains the status quo.	The most positive impacts come from approving the vacation. Denial maintains the status quo.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

City Council's evaluation and decision on the Petitioner's requested waiver is needed, as mentioned above in the "Background" section and within the Hearing Examiner's Report and Recommendation, issued on July 31, 2025. Additionally, the recommended vacation is subject to the conditions listed in Conclusion 10 of the Hearing Examiner's Report and Recommendation. All evaluation and follow-up should be coordinated between/among the Petitioner and the appropriate City departments referenced in the Report and Recommendation.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Hearing Examiner recommends approval of the requested vacation subject to the condition(s) contained in Conclusion 10 of the Hearing Examiner's Report and Recommendation and further subject to the City Council's separate determination on the requested fee waiver

FISCAL IMPACT:

The full potential fiscal impact of this street vacation is not known at this time. If a given vacation is approved, a fair market appraisal or a market rate analysis is typically performed after first reading of the ordinance by Public Works for the area to be vacated. In this case, it was apparent at the hearing that this had been done already, at least preliminarily, because of the waiver request. Depending on Council's decision on the Petitioner's request for a waiver, the Petitioner may be required to pay the City the market value amount as a condition to the street vacation being finalized. No property tax increase is anticipated here due to the additional square footage added to abutting properties because UWT is a tax-exempt governmental entity.

ATTACHMENTS:

- The Hearing Examiner's City Council Action Memorandum, dated September 15, 2025.
- The Hearing Examiner's Report and Recommendation to the City Council, issued on July 31, 2025.
- The City Exhibit List, City Exhibits C-1 through C-19, Petitioner Witness List, Petitioner Exhibit List, and Petitioner Exhibits P-1 through P-7.
- The verbatim electronic recording from the hearing held on July 24, 2025.