



**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Katie Johnston, Interim Director, Neighborhood and Community Services  
Sarah Bridgeford, Community Resources Analyst Principal, Neighborhood and Community Services  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Ordinance to Amend Tacoma Municipal Code 1.45: Neighborhood Councils  
**DATE:** April 8, 2025

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### **SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:**

An ordinance amending 1.45 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), relating to Neighborhood Councils, to amend the chapter following the 2024 Neighborhood Council Program review. The Ordinance clarifies the roles and expectations of the Neighborhood Councils, Community Council of Tacoma (CCOT), and the City, in addition to extending the review period by 180 days

### **BACKGROUND:**

**This Department's Recommendation is Based On:** a 7-month review process of TMC 1.45 and the Neighborhood Council Standards and Guidelines. The review was conducted in 2024, consistent with the requirement in TMC 1.45 that the Neighborhood Council Program be reviewed every five years. NCS staff completed the review in partnership with the Community Council of Tacoma (CCOT) Chair and representatives from each of the Neighborhood Councils. TMC 1.45 amendment recommendations were presented to Community Vitality and Safety Committee (CVS) on December 12, 2024, including some differences between staff and Neighborhood Council recommendations. CVS passed a set of recommendations including staff recommendations to move forward to the City Council in an ordinance. The recommendations clarify duties and expectations of the City, Neighborhood Councils, and CCOT.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:**

The updates being made in TMC 1.45 improve clarity of duties and expectations, which impact engagement of the community and whose voices are heard and represented in the Neighborhood Councils.

The 2024 review process was designed to be collaborative with representatives from each of the Neighborhood Councils, independent organizations that promote community-based efforts for neighborhood improvement. Representatives participated throughout the review process from design of the process through development of recommendations.

To broaden community engagement, a survey was created to serve a dual purpose: 1) to support the review and updates to the Standards and Guidelines and TMC 1.45, and 2) to provide the Neighborhood Councils with tangible data and information that they can consider and incorporate into their Neighborhood Council to expand and improve upon their current activities. In addition to City staff supporting outreach and engagement through social media posts, providing flyers to community centers, and working with Safe Streets to support outreach through their community mobilization contract, each Neighborhood Council had at least one representative supporting



outreach for the survey. Representatives used various methods including attending community events, speaking with community members, and sharing with their Neighborhood Councils. 148 surveys were received from a diverse pool of respondents, closely mirroring races and ethnicities in the Tacoma Equity Index. The survey reached individuals from all age ranges and genders. Respondents provided feedback on the Neighborhood Council Program's successes, areas for improvement, and barriers to engagement. Survey respondents also provided specific recommendations to update the Standards and Guidelines and TMC 1.45. Feedback was considered while developing recommendations.

## 2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

**Equity and Accessibility:** The Neighborhood Council Program is designed to increase engagement with communities throughout Tacoma. Proposed amendments to TMC 1.45, in conjunction with changes made to the Standards and Guidelines, retain access to the Neighborhood Council and encourage engagement from people within the catchment area of each Neighborhood Council.

### **Civic Engagement:**

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.

Increase the number of residents who participate civically through volunteering and voting.

## ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Reinstate language identifying the Neighborhood Councils as advisors to the City and City Council and adding City responsibilities.	Aligns with recommendations of the Neighborhood Council representatives.	Neighborhood Councils would need to align with Committees, Boards, and Commissions and both changes increase compliance requirements and City resources needed.
2. Make no changes.	The program will operate with no impacts to the CCOT, Neighborhood Councils, or City staff.	Clarity will not be increased and Neighborhood Council recommendations would not be implemented.

## EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The Standards and Guidelines provide additional detail on duties and expectations of the City, Neighborhood Councils, and CCOT. City representatives are liaisons to each Neighborhood Council and the CCOT and Neighborhood and Community Services Department supports the Neighborhood Council Program, providing opportunities for input and measurements of success. Neighborhood Councils submit annual reports.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the revised TMC 1.45 language.



City of Tacoma

## City Council Action Memorandum

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to the changes as proposed.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Amended TMC 1.45