



# Public Records Policy

City of Tacoma | Public Records Office

GPFC  
May 20, 2025  
ITEM #



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## Presentation Type



- Informational Only

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## OVERVIEW



- The City's Public Records Office (PRO) has prepared an up-to date Public Records Policy to inform requesters of the City's protocols, requirements, expectations regarding the requesting and production of records.
- This informational briefing is to inform GPFC of the contents of the updated Policy, which includes specific deadlines for requesters and implements a fee structure for the production of electronic records.

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## OVERVIEW



- The Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) ("PRA") requires disclosure of all City of Tacoma (including TPU) records upon request from a member of the public (with certain exemptions).
- The PRA directs public agencies to publish policies, rules and procedures regarding public records requests.

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## BACKGROUND



- PRA broadly defines public records as all content “relating to the conduct of government or proprietary function” “prepared, owned, used, or retained” by the City.
- Number and complexity of records requests is ever increasing.
  - 4,029 in 2024
  - 1,607 year to date in 2025
- Majority of City’s records are now created and maintained electronically.

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## ISSUES



- City has seen uptick in requests for broad categories of records.
  - Can generate hundreds, even thousands of responsive records needing review and processing by PRO staff prior to production to requester
- Policy will clarify to requesters that certain requirements and protocols apply to the processing of requests.
- Policy will provide PRO staff with clear authority to efficiently and consistently process requests.

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## ISSUES



- Policy directs requesters to utilize City's on-line records request system, GovQA.
- Requests can be made other ways, but all requests will be moved to GovQA for correspondence and production of records.
  - Supports efficiency and consistency in communicating with requesters
  - Keeps all records of a request inside of the GovQA system

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## ISSUES



- Policy informs that fees are stated in current Fee Schedule adopted by City Council.
- 2025-2026 Fee Schedule:
  - 15 cents per paper copy page
  - 10 cents per page scanned from paper
  - 10 cents per gigabyte for transmission of records in electronic format
  - 49 cents per minute of staff time for redaction of body worn camera records
  - No fee is charged if PRO determines cost of collecting fee is greater than fee amount

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## ISSUES



- PRA allows production of records to be satisfied in installments.
- PRA allows a deposit to be collected prior to processing voluminous or complex requests.
- Policy informs requesters that records, or installments will not be provided until the initial installment is retrieved within the stated time and any fees or deposits are provided.

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## ISSUES



- Policy provides PRO staff with clear authority to close requests that have not been paid for or retrieved within the stated time.
  - Gives staff ability to close abandoned requests quickly and consistently
  - Results in staff ability to better and more efficiently serve the public by focusing on requests that are being actively pursued by the requester

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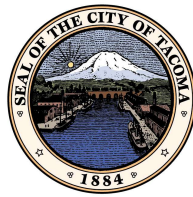
## NEXT STEPS



- Policy will be adopted by City Manager and Utility Director with future effective date.
- Notification to public via COT/TPU websites of Policy adoption.
- As of effective date of Policy fees will be assessed and protocols in Policy will be implemented

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