



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Allyson Griffith, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS)
COPY: Community Vitality and Safety Committee
PRESENTER: Sarah Bridgeford, Community Resources Analyst Principal, NCS
Andrea Haug, Chair, Community Council of Tacoma (CCOT)
SUBJECT: Neighborhood Council Program Review: Standards and Guidelines Recommendations
DATE: January 9, 2025

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) staff, in partnership with the Community Council of Tacoma (CCOT) Chair, were asked to return to the Community Vitality and Safety Committee (CVS) after the [December 12, 2024 CVS presentation](#) (regarding [Tacoma Municipal Code \(TMC\) 1.45](#) and the [Standards and Guidelines](#)) to further discuss the Standards and Guidelines updates. Staff and the CCOT Chair will be presenting an informational briefing on the updated Neighborhood Council Standards and Guidelines, a document that provides additional information regarding the administrative responsibilities of the City, and the City’s expectations and requirements for the Neighborhood Councils and CCOT.

BACKGROUND:

The [Neighborhood Council Program](#) was established by Ordinance 25188 in 1992. TMC 1.45 mandates a review of the Neighborhood Council Program every five years. NCS staff, in partnership with the CCOT Chair and representatives from the Neighborhood Councils (“Champions”), began the 2024 Neighborhood Council Program review after presenting an overview of the review process to CVS [on April 11, 2024](#). Staff and the CCOT Chair presented an update on outreach and engagement to CVS [on September 12, 2024](#), and the recommendations were presented on December 12, 2024.

CVS approved to move forward the TMC 1.45 amendment recommendations in an ordinance for City Council consideration. This amendment includes changes that differed from the Champions’ recommendations to add language referencing the Neighborhood Councils as advisors and reinstating the “City responsibilities” section of Code. Instead, staff recommended maintaining the current language where the “advisor” role was recommended, to avoid restructuring the program to align with Committees, Boards and Commissions (CBC). Staff also recommended alternate language to address the intent of the Champions’ recommendation for the “City responsibilities” section of code, accomplished by carrying over various City duties to the “Neighborhood Council Program Support” section of the Standards and Guidelines. Staff will be presenting the TMC 1.45 amendment to the City Council in February.

ISSUE:

Attached to this memo is the updated Standards and Guidelines document, with edits in blue font, for CVS review. In most cases, staff supported Champion recommendations. However, there were three Champion recommendations, impacting four sections of the Standards and Guidelines, where staff had an alternate recommendation. While the staff recommendations are reflected in the Standards and Guidelines companion document, staff want to recognize and outline the difference between the Champions and staff recommendations. These differences are:



- “Section 1: Neighborhood Council Program Overview” and “Section 6: Neighborhood Council Program Support”, the Champions recommended adding language identifying their roles as advisors. This language was not move forward in TMC 1.45 by CVS to avoid restructuring the program in a CBC; therefore, the current language will be maintained.
- “Section 3: Bylaw Requirements”, the Champions recommended removing the provision that Neighborhood Councils cannot restrict participation or board representation based on tenure of service. To support inclusion and participation on the board, this language will be maintained.
- “Section 4: Neighborhood Council Essential Duties and Expectations”, the Champions recommended removing the three-day notice requirement for voted decisions. Considering the Neighborhood Councils’ concern of volunteer capacity while still supporting transparent communication and community participation, the Standards and Guidelines will require advance notice, with a 24-hour preference.

Below is a summary of the Standards and Guidelines updates that will be presented to CVS in this informational briefing.

| Standards and Guidelines Section | Summary of Updates |
|---|---|
| Section 1: Neighborhood Council Program Overview | Align the second paragraph with TMC. |
| Section 2: Neighborhood Council Program & Tacoma 2025 | On hold; update within six months of Tacoma 2035 adoption. |
| Section 3: Bylaw Requirements | Remove specific bylaw review timeline and term limits; CCOT and Neighborhood Council bylaws must address these. |
| | Clarify “tenure of service” and “board”. |
| Section 4: Neighborhood Council Essential Duties & Expectations | Align language with the Neighborhood Councils role/City processes. |
| | Update notice requirement for voted decisions to “advance”, with a 24-hour preference. |
| Section 5: CCOT Essential Duties & Expectations | Align TMC and Standards and Guidelines and clarify role. |
| Section 6: Neighborhood Council Program Support | Update response expectations, sharing Neighborhood Council’s information, and Feedback system. |
| | Add six City duties in alignment with the Champions’ TMC 1.45.070 “City responsibilities” recommendation. |
| Section 7: Funding Opportunities | Add reference to the City’s funding process. |

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.