



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

**TO:** Mayor & City Council

**FROM:** Council Member Joe Bushnell and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster

**COPIES TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Hyun Kim, Deputy City Manager; Allyson Griffith, Interim Deputy City Manager; Chris Bacha, City Attorney

**SUBJECT:** **Supporting the capacity and community reach for South Tacoma Green Blocks program**

**DATE:** May 23, 2025

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**I ask for your support for a Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$15,000 to supplement the \$30,000 South Tacoma Neighborhood Planning Booster funding to conduct a full Green Blocks-scale program in the South Tacoma Neighborhood.**

**LEGISLATIVE INTENT:**

**Council Contingency Fund Request:**

This funding opportunity will leverage a proven existing program model while piloting the development of a systems approach to partnering in neighborhood-level greening efforts. Urban Forestry and the Tacoma Tree Foundation will be bringing the “Green Blocks” community tree planting program to South Tacoma. Prior to the kickoff of Green Blocks, a plantable space inventory of areas within the project footprint that are suitable for tree planting will be conducted.

Green Blocks is a community outreach-driven tree planting initiative co-managed by Tacoma Tree Foundation and City of Tacoma Urban Forestry, which entails door-to-door outreach along priority planting corridors and working with individual property owners to select, deliver, and plant trees in the public right-of-way adjacent to their properties, at no charge. The program culminates in a volunteer community tree planting event where volunteers provide planting assistance. Previous Green Blocks programs have resulted in hundreds of new trees planted in the Tacoma Mall (2022), McKinley (2023), Lincoln (2024), and Hilltop (2025) neighborhoods.

During the \$50,000 participatory budgeting process for the South Tacoma Neighborhood Planning Booster Grant, which received over 600 votes, the community voted to fund two projects. The top project was tree planting support receiving \$30,000. Staff then reached out to Urban Forestry, Parks Tacoma, the Tacoma Tree Foundation (TTF), and the Trust for Public Land to collaborate on a project for South Tacoma.

The \$15,000 of Council Contingency Funding will supplement the \$30,000 South Tacoma Neighborhood Planning Booster funding. The additional \$15,000 allows the program to move forward at full scale, similar in scope and size to previous iterations of Green Blocks in other neighborhoods. While the Booster Grant and Council Contingency Funding will primarily support the administrative needs for the program, the City’s Urban Forestry Program will supplement with

Fee-in-Lieu funds to support the program, including the purchase of trees, soil, mulch, stakes, watering bags, and other supporting materials.

**FUNDING REQUESTED:**

\$ 15,000

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: June 10, 2024

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

The South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan was co-created with the South Tacoma community.

Engagement included 1,300+ “engagements” with community members:

- 4 focused community events and meetings: 200+ participants
- 13+ interview conversations with key collaborators
- 2 online community surveys and 1 interactive map: 200+ replies
- 2 phases of multilingual outreach (in 6 languages): 200+ responses in Vietnamese, Spanish, Korean, Russian, and Ukrainian
- 2 walking tours: 50+ participants
- 4 pop-up events: 190 comments received
- 3 focus groups: 24 participants
- Tabling at 3 community events to collect community booster votes: 300+ participants
- Community briefings (Neighborhood Council; Business District)

**2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**Equity and Accessibility:** As of 2017, an analysis of LiDAR data showed that Tacoma’s tree canopy is not distributed evenly across the city, with some census blocks in low opportunity areas experiencing as low as 3 percent tree canopy cover, while others in high opportunity areas have as great as 64 percent tree canopy cover.<sup>1</sup> This results in low opportunity areas experiencing greater urban heat island effects, as well as limited access to other social, environmental, and economic benefits provided by greater tree canopy. By protecting and expanding Tacoma’s urban forest, the City can better ensure that all residents have the ability to reap the economic, health, and social benefits of green infrastructure and green space.<sup>2</sup>

**Economy/Workforce:** *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity

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

Decrease the number of vacant properties downtown and in the neighborhood business districts.

**Civic Engagement:** *Equity Index Score:* Low 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.

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

**Livability:** *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity

Improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health needs assessment and CHIP, for all Tacoma residents

How does your policy, program, or service help or harm the health of the natural environment?<sup>2</sup> (e.g. reduction in carbon emissions, open space conditions, sustainability, clean air, water and soil, and noise and light pollution).

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<sup>1</sup> [City of Tacoma - Canopy Cover](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Tacoma Community Forestry](#)

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

During this engagement tree planting and tree canopy support was one of the top requests from community. This is reflected in the Health and Environment goal: Healthy, Sustainable Environment – Create a sustainable, healthy, resilient, thriving community with clean air and water, a healthy tree canopy, and access to health and wellness facilities. Financially supporting this goal demonstrates to community that their input in the South Tacoma Neighborhood Plan will shape Council policies. Enhancing the tree canopy will also create a more vibrant and walkable neighborhood, which will encourage foot traffic and economic activity in the South Tacoma Business District.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Positive Impacts</b>	<b>Negative Impacts</b>
1. Do not provide additional funding for this program	Preserve contingency funds for other Council priorities	The program administration budget (the community engagement, plantable space/site suitability inventory work, coordination with property owners, and volunteer/event coordination) would be significantly reduced, resulting in a smaller focus area, less on-the-ground community engagement, and most likely, less trees planted.

#### **EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:**

In the wider context, this version of Green Blocks will serve as a pilot for cooperation across institutional partners in future greening efforts. In this case, Parks Tacoma, through a partnership with the Trust for Public Lands will be looking for ways to operationalize overlapping goals between Parks Tacoma and the City of Tacoma, specifically as it relates to increased greening along public corridors (ex: parks equity access, urban forest management plans, safe routes to school, neighborhood planning, depave program, etc.). Trust for Public Lands will be helping to analyze a wide swath of datasets to illustrate opportunity and constraints for joint greening efforts including: properties of major public landowners (Parks, City, TPU, WSDOT, TPS, etc), existing and near-future capital development projects, Sound Transit station access improvements, Vision Zero corridors, Safe Routes to School walking routes, major anticipated private investments, etc. This overlay will guide implementation of greening efforts in South Tacoma and will provide a model for maximizing partnership opportunities for greening efforts in other areas of Tacoma.

#### **SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Sponsors recommend adopting this contingency fund request to bring the “Green Blocks” community tree planting program to South Tacoma at full scale.

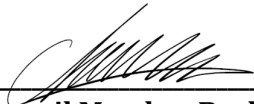
#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This resolution will allocate \$15,000 in Council Contingency Funds. This project will require the trees, soil, mulch, stakes, watering bags, and any other supporting materials to be provided by the

City's Urban Forestry Program, through the use of In-Lieu-Fees, as well as Urban Forestry staff time to administer the program.

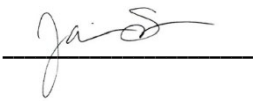
**If you have a question related to the Council Contingency Fund Request, please contact Lynda Foster at 253.591.5166 or [lfoster@Tacoma.gov](mailto:lfoster@Tacoma.gov).**

**SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

  
**Council Member Bushnell**

**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# 3

2.  \_\_\_\_\_ POS# 6

**Mayor's initials** \_\_\_\_\_



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

## Contingency Commitments

		Funding Amount
2025		\$ 321,709.00
<b>Resolution 41610</b>		
Council Requested - Golden Gloves Sponsorship	\$	10,000.00
Council Contingency fund expenditure of \$10,000 to support the 76 <sup>th</sup> Annual Golden Gloves Boxing Tournament in Tacoma.		
<b>Substitute Ordinance 29002</b>		
Grand Cinema Capital Campaign	\$	50,000.00
Dedicate \$50,000 of the 2025-2026 Budget for Council Contingency to the Grand Cinema Capital Campaign for improvements to the Merlino Building.		
<b>Substitute Ordinance 29002</b>		
Rebuilding Hope Capital Campaign	\$	25,000.00
Dedicate \$25,000 of the 2025-2026 Budget for Council Contingency for the Rebuilding Hope Capital Campaign.		
<b>Resolution 41681</b>		
Tacoma Porchfest	\$	10,000.00
Council Contingency fund expenditure of \$10,000 to sponsor Tacoma Porchfest.		
<b>To Study Session June 3, 2025</b>		
South Tacoma Green Blocks Program	\$	15,000.00
Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$15,000 to Supplement the \$30,000 South Tacoma Neighborhood Planning Booster funding to conduct a full green blocks-scale program in the South Tacoma Neighborhood.		
<b>Starting Balance</b>		
	\$	321,709.00
<b>Total Amount Allotted</b>		
	\$	110,000.00
<b>Current Balance</b>		
	\$	211,709.00