



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: David Nash-Mendez, Senior Management Fellow
Doris Sorum, City Clerk
SUBJECT: Committees, Boards, and Commissions Evaluation
DATE: December 6, 2017

SUMMARY:

A resolution relating to Committees, Boards, and Commissions (CBCs); realigning the terms of various CBCs to expire on a quarterly basis and allow for an enhanced onboarding program, realigning the youth positions to the academic year, and setting all youth positions to one-year terms.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members Campbell, Ibsen, Lonergan, and Walker Lee.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

Realigning the terms for Committees, Boards, and Commissions to a quarterly schedule will allow for an improved onboarding and training process for the CBCs, a necessary precursor to the 2025 goals of equitable community representation on the CBCs. This measure will also reduce the interview load for the four Council Standing Committees, allowing more agenda space for policy development and communication with the various CBCs. Finally, the realignment will allow for great youth participation on our CBCs, which will help the City in achieving 2025 goals related to education, human and social needs, and economic vibrancy.

BACKGROUND:

The City currently has 16 Committees, Boards, and Commissions to which individuals are appointed by the City Council. There are currently 159 seats with anywhere between one and five-year terms each. The City Clerk's office is responsible for the interviewing and appointment process for all 16 CBCs and staff support for the CBCs is provided by operational departments.

At the request of the Government, Performance, and Finance Committee, City staff began an evaluation of the CBCs program. Staff surveyed members of the community who are currently serving, have recently served on, or have applied to serve on a CBC within the last 5 years. Staff then convened all staff members who support a CBC and drafted a list of recommendations based on the survey and staff needs.

At the November 15 meeting of GPFC, Staff brought forward the first set of proposed changes to the CBCs program as a result of the evaluation process. The resolution was passed through Committee with some minor amendments.

ISSUE: Currently, there are 159 seats on the City's 16 CBCs with terms lengths varying between one and five years. If all seats were to be filled and members seated the full duration of their terms, Council would interview to fill roughly 52 positions per year, varying from year to year based on the expiring terms.



As shown in Exhibit A, the average number of seats that become vacant each year and need to be filled per Committee is as follows:

Community Vitality and Safety Committee (CVS):	~22 Seats on 5 Committees
Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee (IPS):	~15 Seats on 5 Committees
Economic Development Committee (EDC):	~11 Seats on 3 Committees
Government Performance and Finance Committee (GPFC):	~4 Seats on 3 Committees

In addition to the regular interview schedule to fill planned vacancies, Council committees regularly must hold ad hoc interviews for unfilled vacancies and early resignations from seats. In 2016, this resulted in 24 separate interview cycles compared to the 16 that would be necessary for regular turnover. This again, affects some Committees more than others, with CVS and IPS holding eight interview cycles each in 2016 compared to only three and five for EDC and GPFC respectively. A re-alignment would reduce the number of interviews on each Council Standing Committee. Further, an interim nomination process featuring ranked alternates and out-of-cycle nominations would reduce the necessity for ad hoc interviews even further.

Council has reserved seats for high school students as youth positions on five CBCs by resolution, which includes the Citizen Police Advisory Committee (CPAC), Human Rights Commission, Human Services Commission, Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities, and Tacoma Arts Commission, though no students are currently seated in these positions and some of the positions have yet to be created via code change. None of the youth positions have terms that align with the academic year and all but the CPAC youth position are two year positions. A re-alignment specific to the youth positions and reducing the terms to one year would allow for greater participation.

Finally, the survey of CBC members indicated a desire for better training as a part of the onboarding process, increased recognition of their CBCs in the community, and better alignment with the Tacoma 2025 initiative. A realigned schedule would allow for dedicated onboarding dates, similar to the process currently used in the City’s new employee orientation program. This would allow for more focused recruitment efforts, group onboarding trainings, and orientation to the Tacoma 2025 process.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends a resolution that would re-align terms to allow for a quarterly interview and training schedule.

This resolution would include:

- Re-aligning 78 seats on seven CBCs as indicated on Exhibit A
- Approving a process for ranking and pre-approving candidates for future nominations.
- Re-aligning youth positions to align with the academic year and reducing terms to one-year terms.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose to move forward with all, some, or none of the above elements or could move forward alternate recommendations altogether. Alternate recommendations would require separate consideration but moving forward some or none of the recommendations would fail to achieve the same benefits of better predictability of interviews, better training of CBC members, and increased access for youth members.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.