

CITY OF TACOMA 2022 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Police Transformation

The City expresses its sincere gratitude to the Legislature for demonstrating great leadership in adopting significant legislation in 2021 to transform policing throughout Washington State. In 2022, the City asks that the Legislature continue this transformation by establishing independent prosecutions for incidents involving fatal use-of-force and deaths occurring in police custody. The City supports the Legislature building on the policies enacted in 2021 to ensure community safety is maintained and statewide implementation consistency.

Transportation Investments

The City urges the Legislature to adopt a revenue package to make much needed investments in transportation. Below are the City's transportation priorities:

- On-time delivery of key regional investments, including the extension of light rail from Federal Way to Tacoma and the completion of the Puget Sound Gateway (SR 509/167).
- Local funding and/or enhanced local option tools for cities to meet local street maintenance needs. The City's street maintenance backlog for pavement alone is approximately four times the size of its annual budget.
- \$180 million to complete the replacement of Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge, a deteriorating bridge that provides access to the west side of the Port of Tacoma. The new bridge will improve safety, freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian access, and fish habitat.
- \$9 million as a state match to the Puyallup Avenue Complete Streets Project to better accommodate vehicles, freight, bicycles, pedestrian, and transit.
- Funding for HOV lanes on I-5 from 38th to Joint Base Lewis McChord to provide a completed HOV system through Tacoma.
- \$650,000 to complete phase two of an access revision report to improve access from I-5 into the Tacoma Mall subarea, envisioned to become an urban center for housing and mixed-use development.
- Funding for trail investments, including additional funding for the SR 167 Tacoma-Puyallup Trail and Schuster Parkway Promenade.

Automated Speed Enforcement

The City respectfully requests that the State authorize automated speed enforcement to improve public safety, especially for vulnerable users. Automated enforcement presents an unbiased and consistent method of enforcing speed limits, calming traffic, and maintaining safety.

Affordable Housing & Homelessness

The City adopted an Affordable Housing Action Strategy that has an ambitious goal of creating 6,000 new units of affordable housing by 2028. The City supports grant programs and funding tools for projects that support all income levels, including shelters, permanent supportive housing, and workforce housing. The City is grateful for the Legislature's recent work on preventing evictions in the state, and

respectfully request a continued focus on efforts to reduce barriers to accessing housing and promote housing stability, including:

- Funding rental and utility assistance.
- Additional funding to cities for rapid acquisition of hotels or other buildings that can be used to provide sheltering and housing.
- Increase resources to the Department of Social and Health Services to address homelessness in Department of Transportation right-of-way, including conflict resolution with individuals experiencing homelessness, flexible funding for incidental expenses necessary to assist individuals, and provide supplemental funds for city outreach workers and clean-ups.

Transfers to the Northwest ICE Processing Center

The City appreciates the Legislature’s bold action to ban privately operated detention centers. The City supports policies that limit transfers into the Northwest ICE Processing Center.

COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The City of Tacoma recognizes that a thriving community requires strong communication, collaboration, and innovation with our partners. The Tacoma Anchor Institutions Network is comprised of organizations rooted in Tacoma that have joined together to advance common goals to build community wealth, resilience, and improve opportunities for all. The collective priorities of the Anchors are aligned with the community-crafted Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan. We are pleased to join community organizations in asking for your assistance with the following:

Metro Parks Tacoma:

- The City supports Metro Parks Tacoma’s request for funding to support the design and replacement of Dash Point Pier, which is utilized by Northeast Tacoma residents.
- The City supports funding enhancements to the Department of Natural Resources’ Derelict Vessel Program, as Metro Parks has been repeatedly impacted by derelict vessels at the marina and shoreline areas.

Pierce County:

- The City supports funding for public health and pandemic support for K-12 education.
- The City supports increased diversity in housing options and funding for homeownership projects.
- The City supports creation and funding of educational resources that will increase the number of behavioral health professionals in Pierce County.
- The City joins Pierce County in requesting that the Legislature increase funding for multi-modal transportation projects such as the Pipeline Trail and future investments in the SR-167 trail system. The City supports state funding for first- and last-mile infrastructure connections to major transit projects.

Tacoma Housing Authority:

- The City supports THA’s efforts to advocate for a Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) Exemption for Affordable Housing: The legislature passed a REET exemption for affordable housing in 2020, but it was vetoed due to pandemic-related budget concerns. Enacting this exemption would create more opportunities to preserve the existing supply of affordable housing by incentivizing property sales to non-profit or public entities.

- The City supports THA’s requests of the legislature to make a significant competitive allocation to the Housing Trust Fund as part of the Supplemental Capital Budget. We encourage the legislature to include funds for the preservation of existing affordable homes, including USDA, PBRA, and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit-financed properties at risk of losing their affordability.

Pierce Transit:

- The City joins Pierce Transit in requesting that the Legislature identify a new, sustainable, statewide public transportation funding solution to support an essential level of service. An effective revenue tool will protect existing sources of public transportation revenue while incorporating new and innovative funding models to ensure the stability and reliability of equitable public transportation in Washington State.

Port of Tacoma:

- The City supports the Port of Tacoma in advocacy efforts to streamline the awarding of Remedial Action Grants through the Department of Ecology, and securing funding for key regional transportation projects such as State Route 167, the I-5/Port of Tacoma Interchanges, and Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge.

Sound Transit:

- The City supports Sound Transit’s efforts to seek state funding to support the target delivery dates for the agency’s projects and services.

South Sound Housing Affordability Partners:

- The City will coordinate efforts on attainable housing with the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners, a coalition of elected officials representing Pierce County, various South Sound cities, and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians who are committed to fostering housing stability and attainability in our communities.

South Sound Military and Communities Partnership:

- The City supports prioritizing transportation funding to advance work along I-5 through the Nisqually River Delta.
- The City supports amending the Defense Community Compatibility Account statute to improve the program’s effectiveness as it is crucial to the long-term strategy to resolve encroachment in the North Clear Zone.
- The City joins SSMCP in urging the Legislature to improve the state’s occupational licensing processes through the adoption of interstate compacts, reciprocity agreements, and enhanced spouse licensure to reduce barriers to employment for military families relocating to Washington.

Tacoma Public Schools:

- The City joins Tacoma Public Schools in requesting that the State maintain school district funding based on the greater of the October 2019 enrollment count or the current count so that districts can maintain adequate instructional and support staffing throughout the year.
- The City supports the establishment of a robust system for expanded learning opportunities through sustainable funding and priority grant-making opportunities for community partner

agencies to provide student supports and enhanced learning opportunities for youth from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. and other non-school hours.

- The City supports revision of the student transportation funding statute to fully cover the actual costs of student transportation. The formula must include all costs related to transportation employee benefits mandated by the state through the School Employee Benefits Board (SEBB).
- The City supports increasing the funding for school support staff such as, McKinney-Vento (homeless) liaisons/social workers, psychologists (mental health), nurses (IEP supports), custodians, security personnel, transportation services and parent involvement coordinators.

Higher Education

- The City supports preserving funding for community and technical colleges, including Tacoma Community College and Bates Technical College.

Additional Support/Oppose/Monitor Legislative Issues for General Government

Climate Justice/Environmental Stewardship

Clean Transportation: The City supports policies that encourage more fuel-efficient and alternative-fuel vehicles and fuels. The City requests that the Clean Fuel standard legislation enacted by the Legislature in 2021 be preserved.

Clean Buildings: The City supports policies and investments that reduce the carbon intensity of new and existing buildings, including expanding energy efficiency, green building standards, upgrades to public buildings, and other measures.

Culvert and Stormwater Funding: The City supports state investments in local culvert and stormwater projects to improve fish passage and water quality.

Producer Responsibility: The City supports legislation that helps prevent waste and creates opportunities for reuse and recycling markets, including producer responsibility and product stewardship models.

Funding for Asarco clean-up efforts: The City supports ongoing appropriation for the Department of Ecology's program to address legacy contamination from the Asarco smelter plume in Tacoma.

Pandemic recovery

The City supports policies and funding programs that promote community and economic resiliency as the state emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. The City also encourages clean-up efforts on WSDOT rights-of-way to address blight and debris that accumulated during the pandemic.

Community & Economic Development

Economic Development Tools: The City supports expanded and new economic development tools, including expanding commercial office space development tools and other proposals.

Green Economy and Growth: The City supports legislation that will develop green jobs including in urban forestry growth, renewable energy growth, natural storm water infrastructure, urban farming, and green technology development, making sure that these jobs are promoted within highly vulnerable communities.

Social Equity in the Cannabis Industry: The City supports the recommendations of the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force to foster a more equitable cannabis industry in Washington state and better support business owners of color. These include technical and financial assistance to social equity applicants to reduce barriers to entry in the industry and help these new businesses thrive.

Liquor License Expanded Authority: The City supports the Liquor and Cannabis Board's efforts to collaborate with licensees on the provision of alcoholic beverages via curbside pick-up, take-out, and delivery throughout the remainder of the pandemic and encourages further consideration on making the temporary rules permanent to support the hospitality industry.

Guaranteed Income program funding: The City supports funding to launch guaranteed income pilot programs in Washington State and welcomes additional funding from the State to bolster Tacoma's program in partnership with United Way.

City Attorney's Office

Open Public Meetings Act: The City supports revisions to the OPMA that provide flexibility for local governments to hold meetings of their governing bodies remotely or with limited in-person attendance during declared emergencies.

Public Works

Transportation Grant Programs: The City supports ongoing and increased funding for transportation and freight mobility grant opportunities that have historically been offered through the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB), WSDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, and the Safe Routes to Schools Program.

Transportation Benefit Districts: The City supports expanded local authority for transportation benefit districts to allow for continued use of the sales tax funding tool beyond the current time limitations.

Interstate-5 Corridor: The Washington State Department of Transportation is leading the I-5 System Partnership to identify improvements along I-5 from Marysville to Tumwater. The City supports advancing the work of the I-5 System Partnership, and asks that I-5 crossings, especially pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, be prioritized as part of the partnership.

Automated License Plate Reader Technology: The City supports legislation that regulates automated license plate reader technology but will oppose provisions that would negatively impact the City's parking enforcement program.

Bicycle Signals: The City supports proposals to allow the use of bicycle signals in state law. The federal government has allowed use of signals which use a bicycle symbol instead of a circular ball or arrow. However, Washington defines a signal as being a circular ball or arrow, which means other shapes (i.e. a bicycle symbol) cannot be used.

Passenger-Only Ferry Service: The City supports initiatives that help bring passenger-only ferry service to Tacoma. Puget Sound Regional Council completed a study on passenger-only ferry services, and the Seattle-Tacoma route was highly ranked as a potential route. The report indicates that prior to route

implementation, additional stakeholder and public outreach, environmental analysis, and business planning would need to be funded and completed.

Transfer of State Routes to Local Jurisdictions: The City supports policies and funding that would assist WSDOT in improving state routes to current standards prior to transferring them to local agencies.

Public Safety/Criminal Justice

Basic Law Enforcement Academy Capacity: The City supports the Criminal Justice Training Commission's request for funding to offer additional BLEA classes in an effort to ensure that there is adequate capacity for training new peace officers.

Curbing Theft of Catalytic Converters: The City supports measures that address the increasing trend in catalytic converter theft, such as making it more difficult to sell stolen catalytic converters for scrap.

Hate Crimes: The City of Tacoma supports the efforts of the State LGBTQ Commission to address and minimize hate crimes statewide, including supporting efforts that build upon the report due to the 2021 Legislature on restorative justice and required data collection. .

Sentencing Reform: The City of Tacoma supports revisions to criminal sentencing that reduce that state prison population, especially the disproportionate number of people of color, maintain community safety, and decrease recidivism. The City encourages the state to prioritize funding for education around substance use disorders and treatment so that impacted individuals can receive necessary services as an alternative to incarceration.

Firearms: The City will monitor legislation regulating firearms or other proposals to curb gun violence.

Jail Standards: The City supports revising the state's standardized requirements of care to ensure the health and safety of individuals in custody of the criminal justice system. The City will monitor the Joint Legislative Task Force on Jail Standards that is anticipated to make recommendation by June 30, 2023.

Systems Transformation

Equity and Empowerment: The City hopes to work together in partnership with the Legislature to advance reforms that address the disparate impacts of systems and institutions on communities of color. The City supports statewide policies that bolster gender and racial equity in hiring and contracting. The City also supports policies to address disparities in homeownership among communities of color.

Finance

State-shared Revenues: The City supports efforts to protect and enhance state-shared revenues, including liquor taxes, marijuana taxes, and the criminal justice assistance account.

Local Tax and Licensing Authority: The City opposes legislative proposals that restrict the City's authority to impose a local business and occupation (B&O) tax and business license requirements.

Transportation Network Companies: The City supports statewide regulation of transportation network companies that establishes a regulatory structure that is similar to or more stringent than the City's existing regulations, but retaining City authority to continue collecting trip fees from TNC's to contribute to a wheelchair accessible vehicle program in Tacoma.

Comprehensive Property Tax Levy Reform: The City supports comprehensive property tax levy reform that aligns with growth and inflation to allow the city and other local agencies to provide adequate services to the community. For example, in 1982, Tacoma residents approved a permanent property tax levy for fire/EMS at \$0.50 per \$1,000. However, the 1% cap calculation continually diminishes the rate the approved rate, requiring the City to ask voters to re-approve the levy several times. This causes confusion amongst voters as they struggle to understand why the same levy needs to be approved repeatedly. The City would ask that the levy calculation be changed so that it could maintain its levy rate of \$0.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

Tacoma Employees Retirement System

Retirement Investments: The City operates its own retirement program for city employees, as well as the city's LEOFF 1 retirement program, and will oppose any proposals that requires the City to cede these operations to the Washington State Investment Board, or that transfers reserves out of the programs.

Planning

Local Control over Zoning: The City opposes any proposal that preempts local land use authority, including proposals mandating zoning or regulations changes regarding single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, or accessory dwelling units.

Growth Management Act (GMA) Reform: The City supports reforms to the GMA that further facilitate growth within urban centers, integrates planning for climate change, and provides dedicated planning funding to local jurisdictions to implement any new policies or responsibilities.

Fee-In-Lieu of Construction: The City supports legislation clarifying that local programs that establish a fee-in-lieu of constructing off-site requirements are allowed under state law.

Neighborhood & Community Services

Homeless Encampments: The City will monitor any legislation to change or enforce policies addressing homeless encampments on public right-of-way. Additionally, the City will continue to implement the budget proviso language directing WSDOT/City of Tacoma to address homeless encampments.

Programs Supporting Vulnerable Populations: The City supports funding for programs that serve our most vulnerable populations, including the Housing & Essential Needs (HEN) and Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD).

Aging- friendly Policies: The City supports proposals that seek to improve quality of life for seniors in our communities, such as providing opportunities for aging residents to age in place, rather than being placed in a long-term care facility.

Housing Justice Act: The City supports legislation that would ban discrimination against renters based on a prior criminal record.

Fire

Removal of Derelict Vessels: The City supports increased funding for the state’s Derelict Vessel Removal Program. Tacoma Fire utilizes this program to remove derelict and abandoned vessels in Commencement Bay and surrounding waters.

Tacoma Public Libraries

Firearms in Public Spaces: Tacoma Public Libraries opposes legislation that would require library employees to enforce regulations prohibiting firearms in public spaces.

Challenges to Intellectual Freedom: Tacoma Public Libraries opposes legislation that restricts intellectual freedom.

Protecting Library Workers: Tacoma Public Libraries supports protecting library employees in the same manner as all public sector employees (RCW 9A.36.031).

TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

TPU-Wide

- **TPU supports programs to assist limited-income residents:** TPU supports policies and additional funding for programs that provide assistance to limited-income residents.

Tacoma Power

- **Carbon reduction policies:** Washington lawmakers have indicated that they will continue to focus on legislative solutions aimed at decarbonizing Washington State’s economy. TPU will actively engage in and seek to support proposals that decarbonize the economy at reasonable costs to customers and that appropriately acknowledge and credit hydropower as a carbon-free generating resource and align with existing and emerging regional organized markets.
- **Building decarbonization policies:** TPU will support reasonable policies to decarbonize the state’s residential and commercial building sector, including proposals to provide municipal electric utilities the authority to adopt beneficial electrification plans. Any comprehensive building decarbonization policy must be based on sound cost/benefit analysis to understand the impacts on energy capacity and reliability.
- **Support investment in zero-emission transportation infrastructure and programs that advance the development of clean fuels:** TPU will support additional funding for zero-emission transportation infrastructure and policies that advance the development and production of clean fuels, including electrolytic hydrogen.

- **Support equal treatment of hydropower:** Tacoma Power customers have invested in renewable, carbon-free hydroelectric generating facilities for decades. These facilities will continue to require significant reinvestment to ensure their future safe and reliable operation. During the 2019 Legislative Session, other renewable generating resources were given special tax treatment. TPU will continue to advocate for consistent tax treatment or alternative approaches that support equal treatment of all renewable, carbon-free resources.

Tacoma Water

- **Support the Public Works Trust Fund:** Tacoma Water supports funding for the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF). It is a critical program for many public water systems by providing low-interest loans to maintain and preserve their infrastructure. TPU supports public water systems and city partners in their request to restore and protect the existing funding of the PWTF.

Tacoma Rail

- **Explore opportunities for infrastructure funding:** Tacoma Rail intends to pursue funding opportunities to make investments in rolling stock, track, and other infrastructure.