

# 2019 City of Tacoma State Legislative Agenda

## General Government

### Fiscal:

- Making it easier for business to register and pay taxes is a goal of both the State and those cities that impose licenses and taxes on business. The City seeks authorization for the File Local tax and license system to be allowed to bring other cities onboard as desired.
- Public property is exempt from property tax, but occupying or using publicly owned real estate may be subject to leasehold excise taxes. The Tacoma Dome leases space to food and craft vendors, arts organizations, ticket vendors and concessionaires that must currently pay 12.84% of their rent to the State while competing public venues have been exempted. The City seeks exemption from the leasehold tax for the Tacoma Dome.
- The Legislature urgently needs to address remaining issues with its recent actions to significantly increase state funding for K-12 education. Specifically, the Tacoma School District was seriously harmed by funding formula changes and the City supports the district in seeking authorization to allow it to collect the full amount of revenue approved by the citizens of Tacoma in 2018.

### Neighborhoods:

- Affordable housing provides medium and long term housing solutions to individuals and families at risk of homelessness. The City seeks tools that incentivize affordable housing and programs to prevent homelessness and address the needs of those who become homeless. These may include, but are not be limited to, initiatives to provide funding for local housing trust funds, modification of real estate excise taxes, or other means to direct new revenue to enhance construction of affordable housing. Many local government agencies are dealing with the same issues concerning homelessness as Tacoma. The City will look for ways to maximize legislative success by working collaboratively with these agencies wherever practicable.
- The City is endeavoring to improve services for homeless youth in Tacoma and plans to establish a youth drop in shelter. The City seeks capital budget funds for this project.
- The State is a major property owner in Tacoma. Portions of State highways are used for encampments and also become blighted through discarded refuse. Tagging and other graffiti is also a problem on State bridges and other transportation infrastructure. The City seeks legislation or budget authorization providing direction

and increased funding for the Department of Transportation to work with local governments in rapid responses to address these issues.

Transportation:

- In Tacoma and throughout Washington there are heavily used aging local bridges that need significant repair or replacement. The Puyallup River Bridge carried over 30,000 cars per day even with load limits. The City is currently replacing two segments of the bridge. The remaining six segments will require \$100 million more. Existing grant programs are inadequate to provide this level of funding. The City seeks new tools, which may include tolling, to help preserve existing transportation infrastructure.
- The State has initiated a study of the regulations of transportation network companies (TNC). The City has participated in this endeavor. The City seeks some measure of uniformity to regulation of this business but will oppose preemption, limits on its ability to license and tax, or its authority to adopt other regulations as needed.
- Passenger only ferries are increasingly viewed as important options for travel in the congested Puget Sound area and for providing resiliency for our transportation infrastructure. The City seeks State funding of a comprehensive study of the cost and ridership of potential routes in the region and options for governance of such systems.

**Tacoma Public Utilities**

Tacoma Power:

- Washington lawmakers have indicated that priorities for 2019 will include several proposals 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.
- Many individuals in our state, particularly lower-income residents, do not have access to solar energy. "Community Solar" provides the most equitable access to solar as it removes many physical and financial barriers for customers. TPU will seek to create a state community solar incentive program to expand access to low-income customers.
- The transportation sector generates the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Tacoma and Washington State. TPU supports state policies that address electrifying the transportation sector and will seek clear legislative authority

for consumer-owned-utilities (COUs) to offer incentive programs in electrification of transportation for their customers.

Tacoma Water:

- More than 6.2 million Washington State residents, 85 percent of the state's population, get their drinking water from public water systems. Nationally, \$4.8 trillion needs to be invested over the next 20 years to keep up with aging water infrastructure. The Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) is a crucial funding program for many communities around our state providing low interest loans to help maintain vital public infrastructure. TPU supports public water systems and city partners in their request to fully restore funding to the PWTF.

Tacoma Rail:

- The State of Washington administers both a grant program and a loan program designed to support freight rail capital needs. Tacoma Rail has applied for three projects under the Freight Rail Investment Bank and Freight Rail Assistance Program. If awarded, the funds would be used to update aging track infrastructure to ensure safety and to maintain highly reliable service.