



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Council Member Robert Thoms
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: **Contingency Fund Support for the Stadium Historic Business District's Dickens Festival - December 17, 2019**
DATE: 12/12/2019

SUMMARY & PURPOSE:

Support for a Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$1,500 to support the Stadium Historic Business District's 15th Annual Dickens Festival at Stadium on December 14, 2019, throughout the Stadium District; and, and, directing the City Manager to confirm deliverables for the funding commitment.

COUNCIL SPONSOR:

Council Member Robert Thoms

BACKGROUND:

This Council Member's Recommendation is Based On: The idea for the Dickens Festival at Stadium was created by Mario and Frances Lorenz and begun fifteen years ago in December of 2004. They brought the idea to Tacoma after spending many years working with the Dickens on the Strand Festival in Galveston, Texas which uses the festival to call attention to their historical neighborhood. Today a team of Tacoma volunteers works to create the Dickens Festival at Stadium.

This will be the Stadium District's 15th year of organizing the Dickens Festival. For years it has been sustained by business and community sponsorships. Due to the economic impacts of ongoing construction in the Stadium District, there has been a decrease in sponsorships this year and the Festival is seeking alternative funding methods in order to maintain the level of service expected from this event. Funds raised for the Festival go to audio/visual equipment, staging, entertainment, Roving Dickens Characters, horse and carriage rides, promotion, signage, and other marketing for the event. Event organizers committed to requesting contingency funds to cover this event only during the link light rail construction that is impacting local businesses. Council Member Thoms originally shared the request for the use of \$5,000 of the Contingency Fund at the November 19th Study Session; however, the requested amount has been reduced and Sound Transit is matching the City's contribution of \$1,500 to this event.

Depending on weather, attendance ranges from 500-3,000. This year the Festival continues to collaborate with Metro Parks Tacoma, which provides support for a "Victorian Days" at W.W. Seymour Conservatory. The Festival promotes sponsorships from many businesses and organizations. Sponsors are advertised on a website: dickensfestival.net, through a festival program



and on social media. Stadium businesses also support Dickens through their participation in Open Houses and various contests.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Representatives of the Stadium Historic Business District contacted the City Council office to raise concerns about funding and ask for support. Council Members coordinated with Sound Transit to review the need for this event and determine the level of funding that both Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma would provide.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Dickens called for greater generosity in his community; likewise, the Dickens Festival provides a free family festival that affords families the opportunity for holiday celebration and appreciation of the community where they live.

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

- Decrease the number of vacant properties downtown and in the neighborhood business districts.
- Increase positive public perception related to the Tacoma economy.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score: High Opportunity*

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

Livability: *Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity*

- Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

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

The Dickens Festival brings community members to the Historic Stadium Business District during the biggest shopping season of the year. It encourages people to shop at local Tacoma stores, providing all the economic benefits of shopping local. The event relies on numerous community volunteers, who take pride in their work and help create festive spaces in the City. Thriving community events like the Dickens Festival increase overall quality of life for Tacomans.



ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. No Festival	Savings for Contingency Fund	Residents Disappointed
2. Smaller festival, without popular festival elements	Savings for Contingency Fund	Residents Disappointed, reputation of event diminished
3. More Financial Community Support	Savings for Contingency Fund	Cannot get Funding from Other Organizations

COUNCIL MEMBER RECOMMENDATION:

The City of Tacoma’s Council Contingency Fund will provide \$1,500 for the Dickens Festival.

FISCAL IMPACT:

EXPENDITURES:

FUND NUMBER & FUND NAME *	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
1030 Council Contingency Fund	660000	5310100	\$1,500.00
TOTAL			\$1,500.00

* General Fund: Include Department

REVENUES:

FUNDING SOURCE	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
1030 Council Contingency Fund	660000	6311010	\$1,500.00
TOTAL			\$1,500.00



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

What Funding is being used to support the expense? Council Contingency Fund

Are the expenditures and revenues budgeted in this biennium's current budget? YES This is a one-time request for funding from the Council contingency funds.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation? No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact? No

Will the legislation change the city's FTE/personnel counts? No

ATTACHMENTS: None