



# City of Tacoma City Council Minutes

1500 North Warner Street, Tacoma, WA 98416

University of Puget Sound - Tahoma Room

January 27, 2017

8:00 AM

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## Special Meeting - Strategic Planning Work Session

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Strickland called the work session to order at 8:38 a.m.

**Present:** 8 - Blocker, Campbell, Ibsen, Lonergan, McCarthy, Mello, Walker  
Lee and Mayor Strickland

**Absent:** 1 - Thoms

Deputy Mayor Thoms arrived at 10:00 a.m.

### OPENING COMMENTS/ICEBREAKER

Isiaah Crawford, President of the University of Puget Sound, welcomed everyone to the university. Mayor Strickland called on Tanisha Jumper, City Manager's Office, who reviewed the agenda for the day and facilitated an icebreaker, "What keeps you up at night?"

City Council members provided the following responses:

- Lack of family wage jobs
- Lack of civil discourse
- Homelessness
- Maintaining momentum
- Stark differences between neighborhoods
- Impacts of climate change
- Loss of life in the community
- Access to food
- Health disparities across the city
- Service levels - core services
- Discriminatory patterns - race, immigration
- Missed opportunities due to poor communication and lack of dialogue on important issues

Department directors provided the following responses (items with an asterisk indicate a connection to the Council list):

- Building community

- Collaboration and balance at all levels
- Creating a robust downtown with jobs
- Improving image internally and externally
- Creating opportunities in all neighborhoods
- Homeless and mental health issues\*
- Crime rate increase/community safety\*
- The changing role of the library
- The nexus between accountability/ metric and responsiveness
- Growing mistrust (citizens and internally)\*
- Inability to fully leverage utilities for development purposes
- Impacts of immigration and deportation on community\*
- Fair and equitable housing
- Regionalization of services
- Constant challenge to status quo of organization and workforce
- Expenditures growing faster than revenue-fiscal sustainability
- Deferred maintenance
- Labor cost increases
- Cyber security
- Talent-identify, recruit, retain
- Sufficient resources to do core work and maintain safety\*
- Better connections to advanced technology and analysis
- Overall change in what is considered core services and the organizations responsiveness to these changes\*

## BRIEFING ITEMS

### 1. [17-0100](#) Review of Accomplishments in 2016

Council Members identified and discussed 2016 accomplishments, including:

- Permitting policy and code requirement enhancements
- Significant accomplishments on Pacific Avenue, including the closing of the Calico Cat
- Addressing human trafficking
- Transportation successes
- ST3 passage
- Realigned Pierce Transit
- Implementation of streets initiative
- Water Flume and Prairie Line trail enhancements
- Commitment to Click! plan
- Commitment to homelessness issues
- Revitalization efforts in Hilltop
- Tacoma 2025 strategy implementation
- Compassionate human services delivery
- Good budget
- Local people being recognized nationally and being tapped for high profile jobs

The work session was recessed at 9:45 a.m.

Deputy Mayor Thoms arrived here, at 10:00 a.m.

The work session was called back to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. [17-0101](#) Strategic Foresight

Ben Thurgood, Office of Management and Budget, facilitated an activity, “The Big Sort.” The City Council, staff and guests were broken up into seven teams and given 36 local and national trends that will affect Tacoma over the next 20 to 40 years. Cards were to be sorted by the goal areas of Tacoma 2025. Those goal areas are livability, education, economy and workforce, equity and accessibility, and civic engagement.

They then reported back on themes and patterns that emerged during group discussion.

Strategic foresight reflections from the City Council:

- Change is coming
- Intersectionality of trends
- Connection between livability and economy
- Thinking of seniors in a very different way
- Civic engagement - need to do a better job
- Small groups of people speaking for the masses
- Revenues and expenses are not keeping up with growth
- Education has a direct impact on all of the areas
- Increase in organized civic engagement, more sophisticated engagement strategies (i.e. Black Lives Matter, Chamber)
- Education - need to broaden the definition to include apprenticeships, job training, etc.
- Affordable housing - need to define and be clear about what we want
- Some difficult trends and some structural challenges
- What is the status quo? What does challenging the status quo mean?
- Future is fragile - could go either way
- Great trends - double analysis of trends
- Working in isolation (federal/state/surrounding areas)
- Growth projections - are they accurate? Tacoma has not grown at the rates predicted
- Utilization of data - balance between understanding and actually doing

Strategic foresight reflections from department directors:

- Workforce trends were a heavy theme
- Education was beginning and end of conversation

- Lack of employment for middle age group
- Unemployment during wealth earning years very impactful
- Economic future of children and adults changing (less time to save, higher saving expectations)
- Divergent trends in trust in local versus federal government
- Growth in county without growth in services spreads Tacoma resources thinner
- Changing demands of government performance
- Changing trend in Tacoma's image (positive)
- Increased use of social media to connect
- Far reaching impact of the trends

3. [17-0102](#) Identifying and Sharing Emerging Themes

Katie Johnston, Office of Management and Budget, facilitated an activity to discuss problems and work to identify emerging themes to help determine upcoming work and priorities. Council Members were asked to think about the issues identified in the morning icebreaker, reflect on the conversation regarding the 2025 goals, and how different trends impacted Tacoma 2025 goals, and write a problem statement. Council Members worked with partners to reframe the problem statements and then reported back.

- A. Health disparities on the East Side of Tacoma - Council Member Campbell
  - i. Expand to look at Health disparities across the city
- B. Climate Change - Council Member Mello
  - i. Narrow the focus and potentially look at the organizations "green" practices as well as other best practices
- C. Chronic unemployment/underemployment among young adults - Council Member Ibsen
  - i. Further research/investigation on root causes and data to support concept
- D. Tacoma is the sole governmental entity addressing county-wide homelessness and/or driving policy and creating solutions - Council Member Blocker
  - i. Consider framing as a regional disparity rather than "sole governmental entity"
- E. Tacoma's negative past reputation (perception) is holding us back - Mayor Strickland
  - i. Further analysis necessary to understand the cause of the negative perception
  - ii. Consider merging with Deputy Mayor Thoms issue
- F. Lack of confidence in Tacoma's commercial market. Tacoma is an amenity poor community – Deputy Mayor Thoms
  - i. Define amenities; compare Tacoma against communities considered to be amenity rich.

- ii. Consider merging with Mayor Strickland's issue
- G. City Council does not work well as a team - Council Member McCarthy
  - i. Define team and develop shared expectations
  - ii. Explore the various causes; lack of time, lack and quality of communication, lack of process, lack of priority
- H. Lack of civility in public process impedes the ability to get diverse perspectives - Council Member Walker Lee
  - i. Clearly define civility and wanted behavior
  - ii. Exploration of our policies and procedures and civic engagement practices
- I. Ability to meet core services impacted by limited resources and under managed expenses - Council Member Lonergan
  - i. Explore labor cost trends and limits to revenue

4. [17-0103](#) Next Steps

Ms. Jumper stated she will work with Mayor Strickland to determine next steps.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On proper motion, the work session was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

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Marilyn Strickland, Mayor

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Doris Sorum, City Clerk