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2018 City of Tacoma Federal Priorities Agenda

Community Safety and Human Services:

- In 2015, the City launched Project PEACE to respond to national events that exposed the polarizing and difficult relationships between some law enforcement agencies and the communities they protect and serve. Project PEACE is highlighted by the COPS Office among the success stories of the Advancing 21st Century Policing Initiative. The Initiative provides assistance to law enforcement agencies that have already made strides in advancing community policing and produces guiding materials for other agencies to use in their efforts to advance policing practices. The City joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors in urging the Administration to uphold its promises to support law enforcement by increasing funding of the COPS Office and the critical programs it administers.
- An estimated one in five American adults experience mental illness. Children are vulnerable to the mental health of their parents. Tacoma youth report lower rates of mental wellness than statewide counterparts. Living in poverty adds to the risk of mental health disorders. One in four children in Tacoma are living in poverty. Exposure to violence creates risk for long-lasting mental and physical health conditions. Domestic violence is higher in Tacoma than in Washington State and violent crime rates remain higher than comparable cities. Poor mental health and lack of access to mental health support undermines household and community resilience. The City joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities in calling on Congress to pass legislation to address mental health to support local communities to improve mental health and especially to lend critical support to families and youth.
- Heroin-related deaths quadrupled in the eleven year period of 2002-2013. Pierce County is higher than Washington State's rate in opioid overdose death rates. Tacoma has a higher-than-expected rate of maternal inpatient stays with an opiate-related diagnosis – at almost twice the rate for Western Washington. The City joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities in urging Congress to provide funding to respond to the national opioid epidemic and expand access to treatment.
- Nearly 20% of Tacoma's population speaks a language other than English in their home and nearly 20% of Puget Sound business owners are immigrants. It is a priority of the City to make Tacoma a "Welcoming City" and to cultivate an immigrant-friendly environment. The City joins the United States Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities in calling on the federal government to enact comprehensive immigration reform including creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and permanently addressing the legal status of DREAMERS.

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- The Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma is a privately-owned detention facility. It operates under contract with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration & Customs Enforcement to house non-U.S. citizens who are apprehended and determined to need custodial supervision. In August 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice announced it had begun the process of reducing – and ultimately ending – its use of privately operated prisons in part because they do not save substantially on costs and do not maintain the same level of safety and security. The City urges its Congressional delegates to call on DHS to join DOJ to end the use of privately operated prisons.

Economic Development:

- In a survey of Tacoma residents, nearly half said the City should do more to support small and growing businesses. Tacoma is a competitive environment for biological innovation due to its proximity to the medical center at Joint-Base Lewis McChord and home to two leading private medical providers. RAIN, the Readiness Acceleration and Innovation Network, is a life science innovation hub in downtown Tacoma that provides innovators and expert practitioners access to these largest providers in the South Puget Sound to speed the commercialization of new products fifty percent sooner than elsewhere. Tacoma seeks federal investment to support RAIN in launching these new companies that will serve the military and medical sectors.
- The nonprofit arts and culture sector in Tacoma generates a total of \$137.2 million in economic activity. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis calculates the sector's contributions to U.S. GDP at 4.2% or \$730 billion. The City has adopted an action plan to position art as an economic driver. The City joins the United States Conference of Mayors in urging the federal government to invest in nonprofit arts organizations as a catalyst to generate economic impact and to improve the overall quality of life in America's cities.

Environment:

- At the Center for Urban Waters, world class laboratories are creating, evaluating, and applying the best possible scientific and engineering clean water technologies to protect and restore Puget Sound and to lead development of solutions for all urban coastal communities. The Center supports innovative surface water projects across the community making Tacoma a leader in green infrastructure such as downtown rain gardens and the nation's highest concentration of Greenroads™. The City supports legislation that would acknowledge and build upon innovative stormwater work such as that being done at the CUW and applauds the leadership in Washington's congressional delegation to introduce legislation that would protect the water quality of Puget Sound.

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- Tacoma has been long committed to reducing greenhouse gases since becoming a signatory to the 2005 Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. Under the agreement, participating cities commit to striving to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns; to urge their state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol, and to urge the U.S. Congress to pass bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation. In December 2015, mayors from 115 countries gathered in Paris, France to affirm their commitment to address climate disruption. In 2018, Tacoma again stands with The United States Conference of Mayors in calling upon the Trump Administration and Congress to support the fight against climate change by fully committing themselves to Paris Climate Accord, the Clean Power Plan, the Clean Energy Incentive Program, and other efforts that will provide cities the tools they need to combat climate change.

Housing and Homelessness:

- Since the Housing Act of 1949, the goal of a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family – and the expectation for economic stability to maintain it – has been foundational to federal housing programs. Programs such as HOME (established in 1990), Moving to Work (established 1996), and the Community Development Block Grant (established in 1974) have been key in helping Tacoma design and advance local strategies that achieve this nationally shared goal. Availability, affordability, and accessibility are the major barriers for vulnerable people most in need of housing.

The severity of the homeless condition in Tacoma prompted the City to adopt a Temporary Emergency Aid and Shelter Plan. More than 1,300 people were found in the greater Tacoma area during the 2017 point-in-time count. Job loss/other economic reason, eviction and family crisis are the main causes of homelessness. Mental illness is the most commonly reported disability, affecting nearly one-third of the homeless population. Physical disability, chronic health condition, substance abuse and developmental disability are the other most common disabilities. Twenty-percent of those homeless are households with children or unaccompanied youth and young adults.

The City joins the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors in opposing elimination of HOME, and CDBG that serve the most vulnerable populations. Tacoma has invested these programs wisely in our community and will continue to draw on their support to catalyze the array of public and private investments needed for individuals, families and neighborhoods to gain stability.

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Opportunities and Education for Youth:

By 2025, Tacoma intends to lead its region in educational attainment amongst youth and adults. Lifelong learning and access to education will be prioritized. By the end of this decade, 65% of all jobs in the economy will require post-secondary education beyond a high school diploma. A K-12 education model no longer meets the needs of the global economy, making the new standard a pre-K to 14th Grade model. The City joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors and National League of Cities in calling on Congress to provide robust funding for education from childhood early learning programs to programs that help students to obtain a post-secondary degree.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

- The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has consistently graded our country's infrastructure as failing, issuing a D+ in 2017. Tacoma citizens have approved initiatives to invest in local streets and transit, but the magnitude of some projects such as replacement of the 100-year old Tacoma Trestle or the almost 90-year old Puyallup River Bridge cannot be achieved through local funds alone. TIGER has been the only source with the capacity to fund some key transportation projects in Tacoma. The City of Tacoma joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors in urging Congress and the Administration to fund the TIGER program at or above FY2017 appropriated levels.
- Broadband is the essential foundation for our digital economy, taking its place alongside other municipal utilities such as water, sewer and power. Access to high-speed broadband service in every community is essential to our ability to provide quality education, create more jobs, and increase small business growth. Local communities must have the option to own and operate public broadband networks. Local governments are central players in ensuring broadband connection to homes and businesses is achieved. Local governments must maintain their local authority to manage their rights-of-way to ensure the siting of cell towers and small cells is safe and appropriate. The City of Tacoma joins the National League of Cities and U.S. Conference of Mayors in calling on the Federal Communications Commission and Congress to preserve local government authority to manage their rights-of-way and determine where wireless infrastructure is sited.