



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Bucoda Warren, Neighborhood Council Coordinator
 Linda Stewart, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services *ls*
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: An Ordinance amending Tacoma Municipal Code 1.45 to adopt changes to the
 Neighborhood Council Program– Requested December 10, 2019
DATE: November 26, 2019

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of proposed changes for the Neighborhood Council program, public outreach regarding those changes, and request adoption of the proposed ordinance to adopt changes to Tacoma Municipal Code 1.45, Neighborhood Councils.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

State and briefly explain which strategic policy priority is best aligned to this action. Please remove the statements below you are not directly addressing.

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Encourage thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

BACKGROUND:

Tacoma Municipal Code mandates a review of the Neighborhood Council program every five years. In 2018, as part of the Livable City Year initiative, students at the University of Washington provided analysis and recommendations to update the program. These recommendations, as well as outreach to the Neighborhood Councils conducted by Community and Economic Development staff through 2018, were the basis of recommendations presented to Council at Study Session in December 2018. In January 2019, the Neighborhood Council Program was transferred from the Community and Economic Development Department to the Neighborhood and Community Services Department (NCS). NCS hosted a community meeting in February to get feedback on the changes proposed to council in December, and after receiving pushback decide to go back out into the community.

ISSUE:

In mid-2019, staff took all past feedback and reports, and information from other jurisdictions' neighborhood council programs to present a revised set of proposed changes. Staff then conducted a new round of outreach on these proposed changes. This outreach included an online survey, community meetings, and an offer to meet with each Neighborhood Council Individually. Below is a summary of outreach events:

Outreach Event	Participants
Online Survey	44
Community Council Exec Team	5
West End Neighborhood	19
New Tacoma Neighborhood	10
Community Council Public Meeting	16
Open House	5
Email/Call Feedback	7



Based on feedback from the above process and best practice research, staff is proposing changes in the following areas:

1. Clarification of Neighborhood Councils' role relative to City Council by changing the function of the Neighborhood Councils in TMC 1.45.020 from "participate in City government decisions in an advisory role" to the following:
 - a. Foster open communications between the City and neighborhoods to meaningfully discuss City programs and policies that affect the neighborhood,
 - b. Bring neighborhood concerns, priorities, and goals to the attention of the City, and
 - c. Encourage diverse relationships, representative participation, and the inclusion of differing viewpoints and perspectives that allow all residents to feel included and empowered to contribute to improving the livability of their communities.
2. Create a process under TMC 1.45.050B to create new Neighborhood Councils and adjust existing boundaries. The process includes the following guidelines:
 - a. Must hold a public meeting with at least 30 attendees and/or provide a petition with at least 80 unique signatures.
 - b. Must affirm in writing with existing Councils that there is agreement to change boundaries so they do not overlap.
 - c. No more than two (2) can be created in a year.
 - d. No more than five (5) can exist within a City Council District
 - e. Each Neighborhood Council must have a population of at least three (3) percent of the City. (approx. 6,400)
3. Change the definition of membership in the Neighborhood Council Program under TMC 1.45.050C to focus on participation. Identifies the following as potential participants of a Neighborhood Council:
 - a. Any resident, renter or owner of property, business, or nonprofit and their employees, who live or work within a Neighborhood Council Boundary, may participate fully in that Neighborhood Council without conditions. Participation means attending meetings and events, voting, engaging in the creation of annual reports, budgets, and plans, and utilizing Neighborhood Council resources.
 - b. Individual Neighborhood Councils may choose to adopt bylaws that limit members of the governing board to residents that live within the Neighborhood Council boundaries.
4. Adopt changes in line with the City's Equity Framework such as removing the term "citizen" from the code and replacing it with "residents of the City of Tacoma", and adding a nondiscrimination clause in the participation section based on TMC 1.29.
5. Revamp the Standards and Guidelines to serve as a dynamic operational document that gives staff greater flexibility to best serve the Neighborhood Councils.
 - a. Incorporated Tacoma 2025 goals
 - b. Added term limits to board positions; each Neighborhood Council may establish the length of any given term so long as continuous service does not exceed eight years in total.
 - c. Defined the duties and expectations of Neighborhood Councils and Community Council
 - d. Outlined the supports and services the City will provide to the program such as liaisons, training programs, new member handbooks, and technical assistance.



ALTERNATIVES:

Council may adopt any portion of the recommended changes to the Municipal Code and/or Standards and Guidelines document. If Council chooses not to adopt recommended changes, the program will continue to operate under current guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed ordinance.

FISCAL IMPACT:

These administrative changes have no immediate fiscal impact.