

City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Christina Caan, Council Policy Analyst, City Manager's Office
Melanie Harding, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager's Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: A Resolution acknowledging the devastating impact of gun violence in our country and in Tacoma; naming the disparity of those impacts on Black youths, boys, and children; affirming the City of Tacoma's ongoing commitment to decreasing violence in our community; and directing the City Manager to implement a range of immediate actions related to bolstering community safety and the wellbeing of Tacoma's youth. – Requested May 16, 2023
DATE: May 8, 2023

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

In alignment with the commitment the City of Tacoma and our ongoing partnership with Tacoma Public Schools, Metro Parks, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and other community stakeholders and partners to advance efforts to address youth violence, the proposed resolution directs the City Manager to take several immediate actions:

- Provide \$200,000 in funding for safe space for youth and \$100,000 in funding for youth programming for the summer of 2023.
- Ensure that the ongoing work to create a Community Safety Plan includes an effort to: 1) identify a set of data-driven goals for reducing gun violence in Tacoma and disrupting the cycle of violence affecting young people, 2) identify pathways beyond policing to help achieve strategic outcomes and violence prevention, and 3) place a priority focus on youths of color, boys, and those ages 12-18.
- Research the feasibility of enhancing efforts to prevent legally purchased firearms from being used illegally by or against youths, such as increasing the accessibility of gun safes and trigger locks, and to evaluate whether there are unrealized or underutilized opportunities in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, signed into law in June 2022, that could help curb the spread of unlawfully obtained firearms in Tacoma.
- Undertake efforts to partner with public policy research organizations on youth asset mapping and work toward expanding community partnerships and programming specific to violence prevention among male youths of color who are ages 12-18.

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: May 16, 2023

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Council Member Kiara Daniels
Deputy Mayor Kristina Walker
Council Member Catherine Ushka



BACKGROUND:

This Department's Recommendation is Based On: Youths in our country are experiencing surging levels of gun violence, creating a dire crisis that reached alarming new heights in 2020, when gun violence became the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of eighteen.¹² Nationally, gun violence has shown no signs of being a temporary phenomenon among American youths and has risen steadily and sharply throughout the past decade.³ Gun violence is, however, affecting American youths in disparate ways. Black children, as of 2021, were about five times more likely to die from gunfire than their white counterparts. In addition, boys and those ages 12-17 account for the vast majority of gun-related deaths.⁴

Illegally obtained firearms and lapses in safe storage are fueling gun violence across the country and, in Tacoma, stolen guns are ending up the hands of our youth.⁵⁶ The Tacoma Police Department reports that a gun is stolen from a vehicle every 57 hours in the City, with 51 guns reported stolen this year.⁷ In 2021, ten percent of children in Tacoma Public Schools participating in the Healthy Youth Survey thought it would be easy to get access to a gun.⁸ As of 2021, approximately 30 million children in the United States lived in households with firearms and at least 4.6 million lived in a household with loaded and unlocked firearms.⁹

Gun violence has far-reaching consequences for our country and our City. Gun violence not only irrevocably change or cut short lives, but it also traumatizes perpetrators, witnesses, and families, while stoking stress, fear, and anxiety in our schools and neighborhoods.

In Tacoma, we have experienced an alarming year-over-year increase in youth deaths due to gun violence. In response and at the convening of Mayor Woodards, representatives from concerned government agencies, including Tacoma, Pierce County and its Juvenile Court, Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Schools, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and Pierce Transit, have been meeting to discuss shared concerns and a collaborative approach to this important issue. This resolution seeks to capture the outcomes of those conversations to date.

¹ Dan Frosch and Zusha Elinson, "Juvenile Crime Surges, Reversing Long Decline. 'It's Just Kids Killing Kids,'" Wall Street Journal, January 23, 2023.

² U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Underlying Causes of Death 1999-2020," CDC WONDER Online Database.

³ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Underlying Causes of Death 1999-2020," CDC WONDER Online Database.

⁴ John Gramlich, "Gun deaths among U.S. children and teens rose 50 percent in two years," Pew Research Center, April 6, 2023.

⁵ Erica Zucco, "Tacoma police caution parents as incidents of guns on campus pop up," King 5 News, June 4, 2022.

⁶ Julia Dallas, "Police estimate a gun is stolen from a car in Tacoma every 48 hours," KIRO 7 News, January 31, 2023.

⁷ Tacoma Police Department, Press Release, "Guns Still Being Stolen From Vehicles in Tacoma," May 2, 2023.

⁸ Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, "Youth & Young Adult Violence Assessment: City of Tacoma," August 2022.

⁹ Deborah Azrael and Matthew Miller, "Firearm Storage in US Households With Children: Findings From the 2021 National Firearm Survey," February 1, 2022.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

Tacoma Public School youths who are ages 12-18 years old will benefit directly from this proposal by receiving new options for safe locations and healthy programming hosted by partner organizations from 5:00-10:00pm. Parents and family members will benefit from this proposal by having greater options for ensuring safe locations for children during the summer. Simultaneous to this expanded programming, the City will be developing a Community Safety Plan to guide sustained action. The creation of the plan will include both understanding past feedback the community has shared as well as additional community outreach.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

According to national data, Black children, as of 2021, were about five times more likely to die from gunfire than their white counterparts. Expanding safe summertime locations and programming for Tacoma Public School students is an immediate way we can support our partners in providing healthy alternatives to violent activity.

Education: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase the availability and accessibility of early childhood education programs.

Increase the number of quality out of school time learning opportunities distributed equitably across the city.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Very High Opportunity

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

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

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

This Resolution will improve equity in education and livability by ensuring Tacoma is addressing immediate community needs for violence prevention and working to ensure longer-term efforts are being focused on advancing data-driven goals and improving perceptions of safety as part of the overall Community Safety Plan. In addition, opening summer safe sites will help improve access and activities available to all Tacoma Public School youths at a time when schools are not traditionally open.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
No action.	Preserves funds for other related programming. Allows greater flexibility in identifying priority populations for the Community Safety Plan.	The City would be relying on standard annual funding and approaches in response to the rise in youth violence. Without City funding, partner agencies would be further constrained in their goal to provide safe space sites for Tacoma youths or programming for the safe space sites this summer.



<p>Provide greater level of funding.</p>	<p>Additional funding could help expand this summer's program or extend the program into 2024.</p>	<p>The Community Safety Plan underway this year will provide additional guidance for funding investments, including priorities for addressing community-directed safety priorities. Expanding funding in advance of that work could result in investments out of alignment with the City's long-term priorities.</p>
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EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

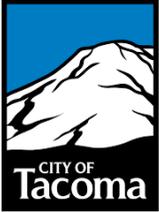
The funds provided for summer safe sites are being given on a one-time basis. City officials will continue conversations with Tacoma Public Schools, Metro Parks, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and other key stakeholders and partners to ensure that summer programming is designed with a focus on at-risk youth. Simultaneous to this expanded programming, the City will be developing a Community Safety Plan to direct and guide additional efforts. The City will also look to draw on the Community Safety Plan's evaluation of strategic goals to ensure funding is aligned with priority objectives.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

The sponsor recommends approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. Fund 1185-CRMJS (HRHS Criminal Justice)	665000	5330100	\$300,000.00
TOTAL			\$300,000.00



City of Tacoma

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What Funding is being used to support the expense?

Fund 1185-CRMJS (HRHS Criminal Justice) will be used to support the expense.

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

YES

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