



ORDINANCE NO. 29052

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to compensation; authorizing recruitment incentives
2 for lateral police officers to adapt to current challenges with hiring, and
3 declaring an emergency, making necessary the passage of this
4 ordinance, and its taking effect immediately.

5 WHEREAS the Tacoma Police Department ("TPD") continues to
6 experience a staffing shortfall with 28 vacancies anticipated by the end of
7 September 2025, and

8 WHEREAS as a result, the department has been compelled to rely heavily
9 on overtime expenditures simply to meet essential service levels, and

10 WHEREAS this approach places a strain on the well-being of TPD officers
11 and their ability to consistently deliver the level of service our community expects
12 and deserves, and

13 WHEREAS, additionally, as TPD attempts to increase its rate of hiring,
14 law enforcement agencies across the state are competing for a shrinking pool
15 of experienced officers, and

16 WHEREAS the TPD, in consultation with the City's Human Resources
17 Director, is recommending an approach to the short staffing issue by offering a
18 lateral incentive program designed to quickly hire and deploy experienced
19 officers already serving within the state of Washington, and

20 WHEREAS, instead of continuing to spend overtime dollars just to provide
21 basic law enforcement coverage, the City has an opportunity to invest in a more
22 stable, long-term staffing solution, and



1 WHEREAS many mid-career professionals are seeking better alignment
2 between workplace culture and personal sustainability, which creates a unique
3 opportunity to attract talent already embedded in our local ecosystem, and TPD
4 believes this approach represents a smarter, more strategic way to rebuild capacity,
5 without sacrificing readiness, standards, or community trust, and
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7 WHEREAS this ordinance would provide authorization for the provision
8 of a recruitment incentive structure for up to 20 lateral police officers that would
9 include a \$50,000 hiring bonus distributed over three years as follows: \$25,000
10 upon date of hire; \$12,500 upon completion of a 12-month probationary period;
11 and \$12,500 one year after the completion of the probationary period, and
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13 WHEREAS in addition, lateral officers would be eligible for up to 120 hours
14 of floating holiday leave; 40 hours upon date of hire in 2025, and 80 hours for 2026,
15 and
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17 WHEREAS officers must complete the TPD's rigorous recruitment process
18 and meet high hiring standards, with the City reserving the right to end the lateral
19 incentive program at any time, and the program would be continually monitored and
20 reevaluated based on the outcomes of the program, and
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22 WHEREAS, due to the continuing and urgent need for quick action on the
23 part of the City, particularly as it relates to community safety, an emergency exists,
24 making this ordinance effective upon passage by an affirmative vote of at least six
25 members of the City Council; Now, Therefore,
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BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TACOMA:

Section 1. That pursuant to Section 1.12.197 of the Tacoma Municipal Code and the recommendation of the Human Resources Interim Director, the City Council hereby approves the lateral police officer recruitment incentive, effective as provided by law.

Section 2. That the facts and conclusions as set forth in the above-stated recitals are incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein, and based upon the same, an emergency exists, making this ordinance effective upon passage by an affirmative vote of at least six members of the City Council.

Passed _____

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Deputy City Attorney