



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Council Member John Hines and Council Policy Analyst Christina Caan
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution – Declaring the inclusion of community members over the age of 65 on Tacoma’s committees, boards, and commissions a priority and directing the City Manager to inform the City Council quarterly of changes to senior representation – March 4, 2025
DATE: February 26, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

A resolution declaring it a priority to include at least one community member over the age of 65 on each of Tacoma’s committees, boards, and commissions (CBC) when possible and directing the City Manager to keep the City Council informed on at least a quarterly basis about changes to senior representation on CBCs.

COUNCIL SPONSORS

Council Member John Hines, Council Member Joe Bushnell, Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh, and Council Member Sandesh Sadalge

Resolution Request: Tacoma is committed to being an inclusive city that seeks to provide a healthy, vibrant, and equitable future for all.¹ To help achieve this goal, we have invested a great deal in ensuring that our young people have a voice in shaping our city. Yet, as Tacoma’s aging population continues to expand, it is equally vital that our older community members also have a meaningful role in developing our policies and community investments.² By fostering greater engagement with those over the age of 65, we can make additional progress ensuring that our policies navigate challenges across the age spectrum and that Tacoma is a city for everyone.

Tacoma’s volunteer committees, boards, and commissions (CBCs) provide a unique opportunity for community members to impact our city’s future. Tacoma has more than a dozen CBCs that work on a wide range of topics, from urban design to human services.³ Each CBC is unique in its purpose, mission, and role, but all help gather information, provide advice and recommendations, and aid the City Council in its decision-making.⁴ While we have a designated Youth Commission, which is composed of middle or high school students and is responsible for bringing a youth-lens to city policies, we do not currently require our CBCs to have a designated seat for a community member over the age of 65. In fact, more than half of our current CBCs do not have a single senior member.

Not all seniors have the time, ability, or interest to serve in volunteer positions, but older community members often have a wealth of knowledge and professional experience that would add value to the discussions taking place in our CBCs. They also have unique needs and interests that younger CBC members may not be attuned to in our community. Seniors can also help ensure that the improvements we make for younger generations are sustainable and equitable across all life stages.

¹ [Tacoma 2025 - City of Tacoma](#); [One Tacoma: Comprehensive Plan - City of Tacoma](#); [Transportation Master Plan - City of Tacoma](#)

² [Tacoma Age Friendly Action Plan-v2Final.pdf](#); [An Introduction to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#)

³ [Committees, Boards and Commissions - City of Tacoma](#)

⁴ [Committees, Boards & Commissions - Handbook](#)



The City Council is responsible for appointing all members of CBCs and this resolution would declare it a priority to include at least one community member who over the age of 65 years on each of Tacoma’s CBCs when possible. It would also direct the City Manager to keep the City Council informed about changes to the number of seniors on our CBCs. This will help ensure that City Council Members keep the status of senior representation in mind when recruiting, interviewing, and appointing new CBC members.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community members raised concerns regarding the City’s attention to senior issues with the City Council and City staff following changes to the City’s senior services in late 2024. This engagement revealed a need to enhance the way senior interests and voices are included in the City Council’s decision-making process. In December 2024, Council Member John Hines proposed enhancing senior participation and inclusion in the City’s CBCs during a “Senior Summit” and received positive feedback from the community for this approach. The City’s Age Friendly Action Plan, developed in 2021 with an advisory group of local experts and partners, also recommended that Tacoma take steps to highlight the needs of older residents and develop a more robust system of support for them.⁵

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Equity and Accessibility: Community members have expressed a strong desire to ensure that our aging population has a voice in discussions about the City’s work and policies. By striving to include at least one older community member when possible, our CBCs would reflect the diversity of our community and be better suited to navigate issues across the age spectrum. This will in turn help enable our CBCs to provide helpful and responsive input and expand the ability of our community members to have an impact on public institutions. Advancing this resolution will also help to ensure that Tacoma remains a city where all individuals, at every stage of life, feel connected and supported.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity
Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.
Increase the number of residents who participate civically through volunteering and voting.
Elected officials, boards, commissions, and volunteer leadership will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity
Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Take no action.	Council maintains the ability to appoint individuals over the age of 65 to CBCs.	Council may prioritize issues other than age when appointing CBC members, potentially limiting the inclusion of senior voices in CBC discussions.

⁵ [Tacoma Age Friendly Action Plan-v2Final.pdf](#)



Require a senior seat on each CBC.	Each CBC may include the perspective and input of an individual over the age of 65.	Council would need to enact a variety of resolutions, ordinances, and City Charter amendments to require a senior seat on all CBCs due to their divergent origins, which would create delays in action. Such a requirement may also lead to prolonged vacancies on some CBCs, as well as upend other preferred size and membership requirements.
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EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP

The City Manager would provide information on at least a quarterly basis to the City Council about the status of the inclusion of residents who are at least 65 years old on CBCs.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION

Sponsors recommend adopting this resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact from this resolution beyond minimal staff time to compile a list of all CBC members above the age of 65. City staff already collect information regarding age on the CBC application form.

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

N/A

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

N/A

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

ATTACHMENTS:

None