



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

TO: Mayor & City Council

FROM: Council Member Olgy Diaz and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster

COPIES TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Hyun Kim, Deputy City Manager; Allyson Griffith, Interim Deputy City Manager, Chris Bacha, City Attorney

SUBJECT: **Resolution – Direction to City Manager on Commemorative Flag Raising
– February 25, 2025**

DATE: February 19, 2025

I ask for your support for a Resolution providing direction to the City Manager on where and when Commemorative Flags are flown at City of Tacoma facilities.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT:

This resolution provides direction to the City Manager on where and when Commemorative Flags should be flown at City of Tacoma Facilities. A “Commemorative Flag” is a flag that identifies with a specific event, cause, theme, or group of people that the City Council chooses to honor, recognize, or commemorate consistent with the City's official policies, priorities and sentiments. Commemorative Flag does not include advertising media, such as banners.

The current list of commemorative flags identified by the City Council to be raised, based on historical practice, is as follows:

- A Commemorative Pride Flag in support of the LGBTQIA2+ community, in celebration of PRIDE events, and as a statement to the public that discrimination, harassment and harm to LGBTQIA2+ individuals is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. The flag is typically flown for the month of July.
- The Trans Pride Commemorative Flag in support of the transgender community to recognize the Transgender Day of Visibility and the Transgender Day of Remembrance, in celebration of the lives and contributions of trans people, while also drawing attention to the public of the shared responsibility our community has to our trans friends, family, and neighbors, to continue to support them, help educate the public, fight for change, and eliminate hate-filled violence. The flag is typically flown for the days of March 31 and November 20.
- The Juneteenth Commemorative Flag in honor of the City, State and Federal Juneteenth holiday. Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. By raising the Juneteenth Flag and through other means, the City encourages employees and community members to learn more about this period in our history and commit to working for a society in which all people are truly free. The flag is typically flown for the day of June 19.
- An orange Commemorative Flag to raise awareness about gun violence prevention, and as a statement of our commitment to end senseless gun violence with evidence-based solutions, pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands, and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our children safe and protect everyone in our community. The

flag is typically flown for Gun Violence Awareness Day and Wear Orange Weekend, which falls on the first Friday and weekend of June.

Whenever a Commemorative Flag is raised, it should be raised at these four locations:

- The Tacoma Municipal Building North (733 Market Street),
- The Tacoma Dome (2727 E D St),
- TPD Headquarters (3701 S Pine St), and
- TFD Headquarters (901 Fawcett Avenue).

Except as provided above, Commemorative Flags may be displayed and communicate messages, viewpoints and opinions only as authorized and approved by the City Council as an exercise of the City's official government speech. City Council shall only consider requests to display an additional Commemorative Flag if that request is made by a member of City Council. Council Member requests should explain how the flag represents the values of the City of Tacoma and articulate how raising the flag is government speech. The Council will not consider requests by an individual or other public or private group. Best practice is to work with community partners to secure flags to fly in association with the commemorative event being celebrated. Flags should be returned to the community partner or securely stored for use in future years.

Federal and state laws provide protocols for flying the United States, Washington State, and Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flags at certain government buildings. Commemorative Flags must be the same size or smaller than the United States or Washington State flags being flown. The City Manager may also direct the display of the official flag of the City of Tacoma to create civic pride, denote a sense of place, and reflect the vibrancy of our residents and our community, provided the City Council has not authorized another Commemorative Flag for the same location and period of time.

Occurrences that may limit flying the Commemorative Flag as directed:

- The U.S. Flag Code requires flying the POW/MIA flag on certain days which would supersede local rules or council direction¹.
- If the U.S. flag is required to be flown at half-staff, the commemorative flag would also be required to fly at half-staff. If the location does not have the infrastructure to fly the Commemorative Flag at half-staff, the Commemorative Flag should be removed during that time period.
- If the City is unable to secure donated flags or funding for additional flags.

The Tacoma Dome may also reserve the right to fly flags at its venue when the flag is associated with a specific event held there. Commemorative Flag policies for Tacoma Public Utilities, the Tacoma Public Library, and the Tacoma Municipal Court are to be determined by the Public Utilities Board, Library Board, and Tacoma Municipal Court, respectively.

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: March 18, 2025

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):

Council Members have requested the City fly the current Commemorative Flags in collaboration with community-centered organizations to develop ways to acknowledge and celebrate our shared history. This has included the use of the three identified flags during annual recognitions. In June of

¹ <https://www.dva.wa.gov/pow-mia-flag-display>

2023, the Mayor adopted a LGBTQIA2S+ PRIDE MONTH proclamation that included language on where Commemorative Flags would be raised at City facilities. Later, it was learned that there were challenges to achieving this goal, including the lack of flagpole infrastructure needed. This set up inaccurate expectations with the community and brought to light limitations to raising flags at all City facilities. The Queer City Collective (QCC) brought concerns to Tacoma City Council Members that identified the need a clear and consistent process.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

The City of Tacoma Proclamations play a critical role in the City of Tacoma in highlighting the positive impact different demographics and affinity groups have had in the City of Tacoma. There is no process set by Council to clarify how to honor and celebrate these communities and issues through display of Commemorative Flags.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity*

Elected officials, boards, commissions, and volunteer leadership will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community.

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.

Representation at public meetings will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community

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

Tacoma is an inclusive, welcoming City, that strives to build belief and trust with all people in our community. A clear, transparent process for how Commemorative Flags are selected and when and where they will be raised is needed to build that trust.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. No action	Maintains maximum flexibility and minimizes staff impacts.	Does not create clear, consistent, transparent process.
2. Fly flags at more locations	Maximizes Council's ability to honor, recognize, or commemorate consistent with the City's official policies, priorities and sentiments	Would require costly flagpole infrastructure improvements, as well as increase costs associated with acquiring flags, providing staffing, and tracking inventory.
3. Approve use of different Commemorative Flags	Honor, recognize, or commemorate additional priority topics.	Increase costs associated with acquiring flags, providing staffing, and tracking inventory.

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:

The City Manager should work with the Mayor and Council to identify community partners which have historically collaborated on providing Commemorative Flags to coordinate on acquiring the required Commemorative Flags for this directive. The City Manager should inform the City Council of any barriers to acquiring the necessary flags with ample time for the City Council to consider allocating funds through Council Contingency or other methods.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Sponsors recommend Council adopt this resolution to provide direction to the City manager on where and when to raise Commemorative Flags at City of Tacoma facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This policy would require staff support and coordination from various City staff who are responsible for flags. Impacts associated with these three commemorative flags will be incorporated into ongoing workload within staff's standard working hours. Future policy direction to add additional commemorative flags could have additional fiscal impacts. This resolution does not provide funding to enhance any infrastructure needed to fly flags, nor does it provide funding to purchase Commemorative Flags.

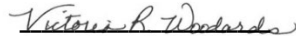
If you have a question related to the Council Contingency Fund Request, please contact Lynda Foster at 253.591.5166 or lfoster@cityoftacoma.org.

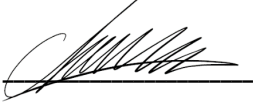
SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY: _____


Council Member Diaz

SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS SIGNATURES (2 SIGNATURES ONLY)

(Signatures demonstrate support to initiate discussion and consideration of the subject matter by City Council for potential policy development and staff guidance/direction.)

1.  POS# _____ Mayor _____

2.  POS# _____ 5 _____