



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Ricardo Noguera, Director, Community and Economic Development Department
Patricia Beard, Project Manager, Community and Economic Development Department
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution to promote the “Theater District” as a label and brand to better convey the district’s entertainment attractions and cultural vibrancy
DATE: February 10, 2015

SUMMARY:

This Resolution directs staff to ensure that the City will incorporate the Theater District label and brand in its future community and economic development efforts and marketing. The importance of this ‘branding’ and marketing action is described in detail in the North Downtown Sub-Area Plan. This action is one of a series of action steps adopted to implement the Plan.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Councilmember Thoms.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The following strategic policy priority is best aligned to this action: “foster neighborhood, community, and economic development vitality and sustainability”.

BACKGROUND:

The core of Tacoma’s Theater District is the vicinity of S 9th Street and Broadway Street within the North Downtown Sub-area. Organizations within and in proximity to the Theater District create a cultural footprint including the Pantages and Rialto Theaters, the Theatre on the Square, the Tacoma Youth Theater, the Grand Cinema, Pythian Temple, Urban Grace Church, Temple Theater, and Tacoma Historical Society Museum. The District is home to the City’s core performing arts organizations: Northwest Sinfonietta, Puget Sound Revels, Tacoma City Ballet, Tacoma Little Theater, Tacoma Concert Band, Tacoma Opera, Tacoma Philharmonic, Tacoma Symphony Orchestra, and Tacoma Youth Symphony Association.

The Theater District has, for the past 125 years, served a vital role as the public gathering place for cultural and civic events, including the Broadway Farmers’ Market, the First Night celebration, the annual Christmas Tree Lighting, Brew Five Three/Tacoma’s Beer & Blues Festival, Daffodil Parade, Tacoma’s Pridefest, annual Block Party and multiple other events that draw thousands to the heart of Downtown Tacoma.

The Theater District Association brings together the collective efforts of neighborhood residents, arts organizations, business and property owners, churches and social services dedicated to the development and promotion of one of Tacoma’s most dynamic mixed-use neighborhoods. These non-profits that are within and support the Theater District generate \$18 million in economic impact annually.

Over the past ten (10) years neighborhood activism has promoted the development of the following projects: Opera Alley, Antique Row, Broadway Local Improvement District, Spanish Steps, Tacoma-Kitakyushu, Japan Sister City Commemorative Garden, Spirit of Sarah Bernhardt Statue, Rialto Theater Art Wall, the Crane mural, Ben Gilbert Park, historic photo mural and Gateway/Goddess project.



The culture and charm of the Theater District serves visitors, residents and merchants alike offering a variety of restaurants, live entertainment venues, coffee shops, pubs, bookstores, antique shops, boutiques, art galleries, spas and professional services tucked within a variety of living spaces.

ISSUE:

The North Downtown Sub-area Plan calls for the use of the “Theater District” as a specific branding mechanism that is easily understood by locals and tourists alike as a description of a vibrant and appealing area in Downtown. This action would resolve that the City will incorporate the Theater District label and brand in its future community and economic development efforts and marketing.

ALTERNATIVES:

Council could choose not to direct staff to ensure the Theater District label and brand are used in future community and economic development efforts and marketing; however, this action is one of a series of action steps adopted to implement the North Downtown Subarea Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

This request is fully supported by the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council, the Stadium Business District and the Downtown Merchant’s Group as a vital tool to promote our downtown and theaters that draw many visitors each year. This designation will allow Tacoma to market itself across the state and will help direct the Convention and Visitors Bureau when sharing recreational opportunities for guests, visitors and convention attendees coming to our City. Having this designation in place prior to the 2015 U.S. Open is important to ensure opportunities to align visitors with theater options during their visits.

Designating and promoting the Tacoma Theater District will further implement the North Downtown Sub-Area Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.