

Council Staffing Interviews Summary

Policy Analysis & Legislative Drafting

Turning community priorities into well-researched, legally sound laws and policies.

The Need

Residents need their priorities turned into laws that are timely, well-informed, and legally sound. Right now, good ideas risk stalling due to bandwidth limits, limited expertise, or delayed review from subject matter experts.

When this work is under-resourced, good ideas languish or die; when it's supported, Council can move community priorities into law quickly and confidently.

The Work

- Researching policies from other cities and best practices.
- Conducting background analysis and stakeholder research.
- Translating community ideas into draft ordinances, resolutions, and amendments.
- Coordinating with Legal to ensure proposals are defensible and actionable.
- Tracking emerging issues so Council is prepared before crises hit.
- Providing quick turnaround on policy questions that arise in committee or constituent discussions.

Collective Coordination

Facilitating collaboration across Council Members while respecting confidentiality, neutrality, and autonomy.

The Need

Residents expect their elected leaders to work together effectively. Council Members need support structures that help them connect earlier on shared priorities, balance individual initiative with collective collaboration, and maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Better coordination increases collaboration, reduces duplication, and strengthens Council's collective impact while honoring the perspectives of individual council members.

The Work

- Tracking overlaps in policy development.
- Facilitating effective collaboration among Council Members.
- Managing appropriate exchange of information on potentially opposing positions.
- Adhering to norms of confidentiality and transparency.

Constituent Response & Engagement

Ensuring residents receive timely, consistent responses and meaningful opportunities to connect with Council.

The Need

Residents expect timely, consistent responses when they reach out. Currently, inboxes overflow, responses maybe inconsistent, and there is limited support for neighborhood-level engagement.

Timely and equitable response builds trust that resident voices are heard and acted upon.

The Work

- Triaging and managing Council inboxes.
- Crafting responses aligned with Council priorities.
- Ensuring consistent response practices across Council Members.
- Managing resident inquiries from start to resolution.
- Planning neighborhood events and listening sessions.

Scheduling & Administrative Support

Managing calendars, logistics, and documentation so Council Members can focus on community priorities.

The Need

Residents expect Council Members to focus their limited time on policy and community priorities, not logistics. Council Members could better serve residents if their schedules consistently reflected their top priorities and routine administrative demands didn't crowd out time for policy and community engagement.

With stronger support, Council Members can spend more time directly engaging residents and less time on logistics.

The Work

- Managing calendars and triaging conflicting requests.
- Reviewing meeting requests for alignment with Council Member priorities.
- Administering travel logistics and public disclosure requests.

Communications & Public Narrative

Keeping residents informed with authentic, ongoing updates about outcomes and progress.

The Need

Residents deserve clear, ongoing communication about outcomes, not just policy adoption. Council is seeking the capacity to share updates, progress on initiatives, and results in authentic ways that reflect both citywide goals and district voices.

Transparent and authentic communication strengthens accountability and trust in government.

The Work

- Developing communication plans.
- Preparing newsletters and digital updates.
- Drafting post-policy follow-up.
- Coordinating town halls and public events.
- Supporting op-eds and messaging.
- Ensuring timely and accessible communications.

Committees, Boards & Commissions (CBC) Support & Integration

Strengthening Council's committees and volunteer commissions so they are well-prepared, connected, and impactful.

The Need

Residents expect Council committees, boards, and commissions to be productive engines for policy and meaningful community engagement. Today, these groups too often operate with limited preparation, follow-through, or integration with Council priorities.

Strong CBC support leads to better policy outcomes and ensures community volunteers feel valued and impactful.

The Work

- Preparing committee materials and pre-reads.
- Aligning CBCs with Council direction.
- Tracking follow-up.
- Managing bandwidth during major policy pushes.
- Onboarding volunteer members and recognizing their service.
- Ensuring consistent connections back to Council.

Meeting Preparation (All Council Business)

Helping Council Members prepare effectively for standing committee meetings, Study Sessions, and Council meetings by clarifying purpose, expected actions, and key information — cutting through the noise and saving prep time.

The Need

Residents expect Council Members to be fully prepared for the meetings where decisions are made. Members often face information overload, limited prep time, and uncertainty about what matters most in each meeting.

Better preparation enables Council to use meeting time efficiently, make well-informed decisions, and focus on the issues most important to the community.

The Work

- Preparing agendas and pre-reads for Committees, Study Sessions, and Council Meetings.
- Preparing concise issue briefings.
- Drafting talking points that highlight community priorities.
- Clarifying meeting purpose and possible decision points or actions.
- Coordinating with departments for timely updates.

External Representation & Leadership Support

Equipping Council Members to represent Tacoma in regional forums and succeed in leadership roles by providing tailored preparation, governance training, and just-in-time resources.

The Need

Residents benefit when Tacoma's voice is strong in regional decision-making. Council Members often enter external forums or leadership roles underprepared, limiting Tacoma's influence and credibility.

Well-prepared Council Members amplify Tacoma's influence in regional and intergovernmental decisions that directly affect the community.

The Work

- Developing toolkits and support for external board leadership.
- Coaching Council Members for external leadership roles.
- Preparing tailored background materials and talking points.