

DRAFT

2017 City of Tacoma State Legislative Agenda

Summary agenda:

- The City supports local control of taxes, changes to the 1% cap on property tax revenue, more liquor and marijuana tax revenue, and new economic development tools.
- The City supports increased funding for a continuum of services, provided both by the State and local government, to assist homeless youth, adults and families.
- The City seeks state assistance to fund replacement of heavily used aging bridges with costs far greater than the limitations of existing grant programs. The City also supports authority to establish street utilities, and sustainable funding for stormwater obligations.
- The City supports the State meeting its constitutional obligations to fully fund K-12 education with new revenue.
- The City supports restoration of State funding for local public health districts.
- The City supports State adoption of regulations concerning human trafficking that mirror those adopted by local government.
- The City supports the ability to recover more of the costs of public record requests.
- The City seeks exemption from leasehold excise taxes for the Tacoma Dome as is provided to competitive venues such as Century Link and Safeco fields.
- The City supports increased requirements on mortgage holders to assure that abandoned and foreclosed homes do not become neighborhood blights.
- The City seeks capital budget appropriations for: Arlington Drive crisis residential center, Eastside Community Center, Foss Waterway Park, and the Pantages Theater.

Detail agenda:

Economic development:

The City supports the use of economic development tools that facilitate urban redevelopment and encourage new development, including affordable housing. This includes, but is not limited to, incentives for downtown commercial office construction or rehabilitation, tax increment financing, local improvement districts, and restored funding of existing tools such as local infrastructure financing and business district assistance.

“The paramount” duty of the State is to “make ample provision for the education of all children...” and the Legislature is faced with a significant challenge to meet this responsibility in light of the McCleary decision by the State Supreme Court. Any solution to this problem cannot create winners and losers between the state’s school districts and must not be done while causing further damage to the State’s social safety net and higher

education or by offloading State responsibilities to local government. New revenue will be required to meet the requirements of the court decision.

The arts have long been a key component of Tacoma's economic development. The historic theaters of Broadway Center are the crown jewels of local arts venues. The City supports the Broadway Center for Performing Arts capital budget request for \$3 million for the modernization of the Pantages Theater

Environment:

The City supports creation of a sustainable funding source to assist local governments with obligations under Federal storm water regulations. Funding should encourage innovation in meeting permit goals for both water quality and quantity.

Public access to the restored Thea Foss Waterway will be complete when two public parks are constructed on the waterway. The City supports the Foss Waterway Development Authority capital budget request for \$4 million for the public access components of Waterway Park, a place where the public can directly access the Foss shoreline and launch and safely secure human powered craft.

Fiscal:

The City believes local control of tax and regulatory processes is in the best interest of city residents and businesses. Local control allows innovation and greater flexibility to match taxes and regulations to a changing local economy. Local control also means allowing the City more authority over its local taxes, such as business and utility taxes. The City supports removing existing State controls over these taxes to allow the City to become less dependent on shared revenue from the State and will oppose legislation that attempts to further restrict City revenue authority.

The City supports changes to the 1 percent cap on property tax collections that will allow growth in revenue year over year of up to the rate of inflation in Washington. The City also seeks full restoration of liquor taxes taken by the State and a greater share of tax collections from recreational marijuana sales.

Property owned by a municipality is exempt from property tax so the Legislature established the leasehold excise tax for the privilege of occupying or using publicly owned real estate. Tacoma Dome and the Seattle Center lease space to food and craft vendors, arts organizations, ticket vendors and concessionaires that must currently pay 12.84% of their rent to the State while Safeco Field and CenturyLink Field have been exempted from

this tax, allowing them to compete for events at a competitive advantage. The City will join with the City of Seattle to seek exemption from the leasehold tax for these facilities.

State funding of public health has been in decline for nearly 20 years. Washington spends less per capita on public health than significantly smaller states. The growing population of the State and the increased public demand for health services has reached a tipping point. The City supports the efforts of the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and other community public health agencies to seek a significant increase in permanent state support.

The City supports authority to recover a greater share of the costs of gathering and reviewing requested public records.

Human Rights:

Affordable housing provides medium and long term housing solutions to individuals and families at risk of homelessness. The City supports the Housing First program model. The City also supports state policies that incentivize developers to build affordable housing. These include a \$200 million investment in the Housing Trust Fund, and eliminating the sunsets in the current document recording fees earmarked for homelessness programs, increasing the existing \$58 surcharge, and adjusting distribution of the funds to assure the majority of funding come to cities.

Policies that protect consumers and support families also reduce homelessness. The City supports greater oversight by the State and local government of manufactured housing. The City also supports wide adoption of programs for family stability based on the successful McCarver Housing Program. The City supports workplace skills and financial literacy programs for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Tacoma and a few other cities have adopted business regulations designed to discourage the crime of human trafficking. The City believes local government must be able to act to address community concerns, it is in the best interest of all when the State adopts similar regulations to assure uniform enforcement.

The City will also seek support of \$4.5 million in funding for the Tacoma Housing Authority Arlington Drive crisis residential center and services.

Neighborhoods:

A recent Supreme Court ruling limited the authority of financial institutions to initiate foreclosure. The City is willing to work with financial institutions to restore some of this authority if long-standing concerns of local government about the impacts on neighborhoods of the long foreclosure process are addressed.

The proposed Eastside Community Center is a \$29 million public-private project to bring together education, recreation, and cultural opportunities for the people of Tacoma's diverse and underserved Eastside. The City supports the project financially and supports the Metropolitan Park District's capital budget request for \$2.5 million for the facility.

Transportation:

Despite approval of robust funding proposals at the state and local levels, serious infrastructure funding needs remain. In Tacoma and throughout Washington there are heavily used aging bridges that need significant repair or replacement. The Puyallup River Bridge carries over 30,000 cars per day even with existing load limits. After a decade of applying, the City has acquired partial grant funding to replace two segments of the bridge. The remaining six segments will require \$100 million more. Existing grant programs are inadequate to provide this level of funding. The state needs to provide new tools, which may include tolling, to help local governments preserve existing transportation infrastructure.

The City supports adoption of authority to create a fee based street utility. Similar funding mechanisms are in use in other states and result in a much higher level of citizen satisfaction with the maintenance of local streets.