



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2021

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A Statement From the Tacoma City Council on Recent Events at South 9th Street and Pacific Avenue

We share your deep distress regarding the events that transpired this weekend at South 9th Street and Pacific Avenue in Tacoma.

As we continue our work and honor our commitment to antiracist transformation and improving existing systems for *all* community members, as affirmed in [Resolution 40622](#), our first stated priority has been local policing. We want to express our gratitude for all community members, including members of our Community's Police Advisory Committee, who have taken the time to partner and engage with us in this work.

We are at a critical juncture in the transformation of policing and the definition of community safety for Tacoma, and we must adapt to the long-term vision that will eventually be defined through community-led antiracist transformation efforts.

As our community-led antiracist transformation work continues, and as we institute some of the more immediate shorter-term structural and organizational changes recommended by 21st Century Policing Solutions, know that the safety of our community continues to be of paramount importance to us and we have directed our City Manager and Police Chief to ensure full accountability of everyone involved in these and other use of force incidents involving our Tacoma Police Department.

When a use of deadly force incident occurs involving our Tacoma Police Department, the City of

Tacoma turns the investigation over to the Pierce County Force Investigation Team (PCFIT) for an independent analysis as required by Washington State Law RCW 10.114.011, which originated with the voter approved I-940. We are following this process and cooperating fully with the PCFIT and, as updates on this investigation and all others currently underway become available, those updates are posted on the PCFIT website and cross-referenced as well on the City's website at cityoftacoma.org/useofforcecases.

Please know that the City remains committed to full transparency with the community we serve. By following the laws mandated in I-940, however, City leadership and elected officials do not have access to any more information than our community members do when these incidents occur. This being the case, our top priority for the 2021 state legislative session is the establishment of an Office of Independent Investigations at the state level to move these investigations out of local law enforcement.

We know many across our community are feeling troubled, disheartened and have many questions for us at this time. We also recognize these events may shake their trust in government. We know many across our community are tired, and we are too. Not only are we troubled by the use of force of the Tacoma Police Officer involved, we are troubled by hearing about street racing, destruction of public property, and the businesses that experienced property damage. The events that transpired this weekend certainly do not reflect what we jointly envision and hope for Tacoma's future.

We ask that you continue moving forward with us in working toward our shared goals. We have made progress in recent months: reinvigorating the resident-led Community Police Advisory Committee, implementing the demands of 8 Can't Wait, hiring an interim police chief, and beginning implementation of our body-worn camera program. More change is coming, including the establishment of a Policing Transformation Team by the Heal the Heart Core Coordinating Committee, and we must persevere through these hard times and stick together as a community.

Simply put, we must do better. As a municipal government, public safety is of the utmost importance. It is our responsibility, as your elected officials, to establish policies within our power to preserve life and liberty. It is the responsibility of the City's leadership to support our policy goals. It is our police officers' responsibility to deescalate tense situations, to the greatest extent possible, often under the most stressful conditions. It is our state legislature's responsibility to pass better statewide laws to help our officers meet the everyday challenges of policing and ensure public safety for *all* of our community members, including Black community members and other community members of color.

What happened this weekend does not deter us and has only made us more determined and committed to change and antiracist transformation. We are dedicated to serving our community and will continue to advocate strongly on your behalf. We know our community's resiliency continues to be tested. We also know that we are stronger together and, as Tacoma has proven over time, we will make progress together.

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