

# 2015 City of Tacoma Federal Agenda

## Summary agenda:

- The City supports new Federal investment in infrastructure, including highways, bridges, and transit funding.
- The City will seek continuing support for its Gang Reduction Project.
- The City supports adoption of the Innovative Stormwater Solutions Act to establish centers of excellence and innovation in treating stormwater.
- The City opposes significant force reduction at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and will continue to work with Federal and local agencies to support veterans' transition to successful civilian careers and entrepreneurial enterprise in Tacoma.
- The City supports My Brother's Keeper and establishment of Promise Zones as part of its Equity and Empowerment Initiative which is designed to assure that all citizens have access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs and achieve their full potential.
- The City supports continuation of the EB5 program, the Immigrant Investor VISA program, as a valuable economic development tool, and the City supports the Executive Order that implements administration priorities for immigration reform absent broader Congressional action.
- The City supports continued Federal funding for locally administered housing solutions such as Moving to Work, HOME, CDBG, and Choice Neighborhoods which have helped many Tacoma citizens.

## Detail agenda:

### Transportation:

Sixty-five percent of America's major roads are not in good condition. One in four bridges need significant repair or cannot handle today's traffic. Forty-five percent of Americans do not have access to transit. In Tacoma, these statistics are illustrated in essential projects such as partnership with Sound Transit to expand the Tacoma Link light rail system by 2.4 miles to connect downtown to Tacoma's densest residential neighborhood, to two of its largest employers, and to one of its most diverse and historically underserved neighborhoods; and reconstruction of the Puyallup Avenue Bridge, an 86 year old bridge in such state of deterioration that portions rate as low as 7.0 on the sufficiency rating scale of 0 to 100.

The City joins the United States Conference of Mayors in commending the submittal to Congress of the Grow America Act that would spend \$302 billion over four years significantly increasing transit funding, addressing the nation's backlog of deficient bridges, and continuing support for a strong TIGER program.

### Gang Reduction Project:

Tacoma's Gang Reduction Project was launched in 2013 after completion of a comprehensive assessment conducted in 2011 per the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) national model. A key finding of the assessment is that middle school is a critical time for youth in Tacoma, when they are exposed to elevated levels of risk and are making decisions about joining a gang. This finding is consistent with the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey data that shows an uptick in Tacoma's 8<sup>th</sup> grade students reporting gang membership – approximately 9% – a rate 1-2% higher than the state average. The Gang Reduction Project consists of six components that address the assessment's key findings and the unique needs of Tacoma's residents. Components include the Gun Safe T Education Campaign and the Co-Op Multidisciplinary Intervention Team (MDIT) that works one-on-one with gang-involved youth ages 10-24 years. Tacoma's work has been recognized by both the National Gang Center and OJJDP.

The City aims to maximize its relationships with OJJDP, the National Gang Center and other federal offices including COPS, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to protect and secure resources necessary to eliminate gang activity among our youth and ensure the core services that continually enhance safety in our community.

### Clean water innovations anchored by the Center for Urban Waters:

At the Center for Urban Waters, world class laboratories are creating, evaluating, and applying the best possible scientific and engineering clean water technologies to protect and restore Puget Sound and to lead development of solutions for all urban coastal communities. The Center supports innovative surface water projects across the community making Tacoma a leader in green infrastructure such as downtown rain gardens and the nation's highest concentration of Greenroads™.

The City supports the Innovative Stormwater Solutions Act which will establish a program within the Environmental Protection Agency to promote the use of green infrastructure and will create at least three Centers of Excellence for Green Infrastructure.

### Joint Base Lewis-McChord and veterans support:

Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) is the largest military installation on the west coast, the third largest employer in Washington State and the largest employer in Pierce County. In 2016, JBLM is projected to support 136,000 soldiers, airmen, dependents, employees and contractors. Through the South Sound Military Communities Partnership (SSCMP), Tacoma is engaged in ensuring the JBLM military mission and the readiness of our nation's defense forces continue in harmony with the health, safety, welfare and economic development of the communities surrounding JBLM.

The FY2013 defense budget called for a reduction from 562,000 to 490,000 soldiers. In 2014, Department of Defense guidance called for an even greater reduction to 440,000-450,000, a number that could lead to a reduction of as many of 16,000 jobs at JBLM. The City opposes force reductions of this magnitude given the vital role JBLM plays in the nation's defense in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Tacoma proudly supports our active military community, as well as the more than 117,000 military retirees already present. The City continually seeks to develop and transition the talent of military veterans into employment in the civilian environment through efforts such as those of the Small Business Administration, the Tacoma-Pierce Chamber, and the Veterans Incubator for Better Entrepreneurship (VIBE) at the University of Washington-Tacoma.

The City joins the United States Conference of Mayors in calling upon the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to recognize and support the role of local governments in transition efforts as well as efforts to maintain stability in local economies affected by cutbacks.

#### Equity and empowerment:

The National Citizen Survey conducted in Tacoma in 2014 showed that 71% of residents believe it is essential or very important to increase equitable access to city services and infrastructure. Equity is defined by the City as "when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential."

The Administration has launched several executive level initiatives aimed at continuing our nation's economic recovery by taking action on items such as housing and education. Initiatives such as My Brother's Keeper challenge communities to implement coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategies to ensure all young people can reach their full potential, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born. Through the Promise Zones initiative, federal offices partner with and invest in communities to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic activity, expand educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime.

The City seeks active participation in initiatives of the Administration such as My Brother's Keeper and Promise Zones and will pursue support for projects such as a community services and development center for Tacoma's Eastside that helps advance our commitment to opportunity and advancement for all by achieving equity in service delivery, decision-making and community engagement.

#### Immigration:

The EB-5 (employment based) Immigrant Investor visa program allows states or private entities to apply for designation as a "regional center" authorizing them to develop new commercial projects in which immigrants may choose to invest. These investments must create or preserve jobs. Successful projects using EB-5 financing have included investments in large commercial property

developments, transit infrastructure, manufacturing, and the redevelopment of closed military bases. The regional center program has been continuously reauthorized since its inception in 1992. The most recent extension, in September 2012, will sunset in September 2015.

The City supports the EB-5 Program which has facilitated projects in downtown Tacoma such as redevelopment of the Foremost Building into nearly 35,000 square feet of Class A office space and development of a new 4-star, 300-room hotel adjacent to the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center.

Each year approximately 140,000 employment-based immigrant Visas are granted to qualified applicants. The United States admits approximately 1 million people to permanent residency annually. Immigrant business owners make important contributions to the US economy. Fifteen percent of business owners in Washington are immigrants. In the Puget Sound area, the foreign-born share of business owners is nearly 20 percent.

It is a priority of the City to make Tacoma a “Welcoming City” and cultivate an immigrant-friendly environment. The City supports the President’s executive order that implements administration priorities for an immigration system that is fairer and more just.

#### Housing and employment:

Since the Housing Act of 1949, the goal of a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family – and the expectation for economic stability to maintain it – has been foundational to federal housing programs. Programs such as HOME (established in 1990), Moving to Work (established 1996), CDBG (established in 1974) and the recent Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Program (established 2010), have been key in helping communities design and advance local strategies that achieve this nationally shared goal.

In Tacoma, the McCarver Elementary School Initiative, an element of the Tacoma Housing Authority’s Moving to Work Plan, is drawing national acclaim for its demonstration of how academic performance in one of the city’s poorest schools is significantly improving as a result of investing in the housing and economic stability of students’ families. Moving to Work allows THA the flexibility to invest public housing program dollars in innovative, comprehensive ways that not only support tenants to succeed as tenants, but also as “parents, students and wage earners.”

The City joins the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors in advocating for federal housing programs such as HOME, CDBG, Moving to Work (MTW) and Choice Neighborhoods that support locally driven solutions and catalyze the array of public and private investments needed for communities and families to regain stability and self-reliance.