



# City of Tacoma

## City Council Study Session Minutes

747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402, Council Chambers

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 894 9617 1192

Webinar Link: [www.zoom.us/j/89496171192](https://www.zoom.us/j/89496171192) Passcode: 896569

**September 19, 2023**

**12:00 PM**

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### JOINT MEETING WITH THE PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Call to Order

Mayor Woodards called the joint study session to order at 12:00 p.m.

#### Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Bushnell, Diaz, Hines, Rumbaugh, Ushka, Walker and Mayor Woodards

**Absent:** 2 - Blocker and Daniels

Pierce County Council Members

**Present:** 7 - Campbell, Cruver, Denson, Herrera, Hitchen, Morell and Mello

Council Member Ushka participated virtually.

#### Joint City Council / Pierce County Council Briefing Items

1. [23-0897](#) City of Tacoma and Pierce County Homelessness Strategy and Funding Updates

At approximately 12:01 p.m., Mayor Woodards and Chair Mello provided opening remarks and expressed excitement for the joint discussion.

The joint study session recessed at 12:07 p.m. due to a technical issue.

The joint study session reconvened at 12:22 p.m.

At approximately 12:22 p.m., Allyson Griffith, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), presented an overview of the City's homeless services, including NCS department structure; homeless strategy, noting goals and progress; and homeless services budget, noting breakdown by funding source and expenditure area. Heather Moss, Director of Human Services, Pierce County, continued with an overview of Pierce County's Homeless services, including an organizational chart; background on the

Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness; goals, noting prevention and intervention; budget by fund source; and 2023-2024 funding by intervention.

Discussion ensued regarding funding, noting what the County can do versus the City and budget sharing; sub-action items correspondence and jurisdictional partners; shared language and goals; state legislation on funding, noting House Bill 1590; alignment of metrics and dashboard implementation; by-name lists of individuals and Homeless Engagement Alternatives Liaison (HEAL) team; allocation of funds and Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Sales Tax; rental assistance; definitions used by the City and County; access to funds and process; and coordination between government affairs.

Moss provided a brief background on the partnership with Social Change Partners and introduced Reed Connell and Brian Blalock from Social Change Partners, LLC. Connell presented the proposed options for a Unified Regional Approach (URA) to ending homelessness in Pierce County, including the need and vision of the comprehensive plan; values, noting the seven that are defined and discussed in the plan; what is at stake; what can be accomplished, noting fundraising, improvements, planning, and coordinating; foundational findings; overarching success factors; what a successful URA will do; advancing a URA, noting the three options and advantages and challenges of each; and phasing options.

Discussion continued regarding community collaboration, noting thoughts on URA; unified response to individuals experiencing homelessness; meeting the need of the community, noting existing agencies, inter-local agreements, and centralizing support systems; government efficiency; geographic equity; City Council letter of support; urgency; community confidence; building trust within municipalities; alignment and layers of bureaucracy; funding and responsibility; jurisdictional sharing of reports, ideas, and wins; identifiable areas to measure and study; tiny home villages; services in rural areas; root of the problem and complementary services; best practices regionally and acknowledging their differences; conversations with those who have lived experience and marginalized represented groups; seriousness of collaboration and Pierce County's Select Committee on Homelessness; building systems that serve all; and next steps.

The joint study session concluded at 2:38 p.m.

The regular study session convened at 2:47 p.m.

## City Council Briefing Item

### 2. [23-0898](#) Alternative Response Quarterly Update

At approximately 2:47 p.m., Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager, presented a brief overview and background of the City's alternative response efforts, including current response methods, focus areas, future response methods, and response spectrum. Griffith provided the homelessness outreach project overview, noting the expanded HEAL team; and third quarter updates, noting staffing, recruitment, and Tacoma FIRST 311 requests. Aleesia Morales and Cassie Hallston, Business Services Managers, Behavioral Health Crisis Response, together continued with the establishment of the Holistic Outreach Promoting Engagement (HOPE) team; launch updates; staffing update; how HOPE has helped; and how HOPE can continue to help, noting a data collection update. Paul Junger, Deputy Chief, Tacoma Police Department, further reviewed the project overview to implement community service officers (CSO), noting the purpose and outcome; team structure and role; and CSO updates, noting how success is measured, external dashboard, and budget impacts. Together, City Manager Pauli and Griffith concluded with the timeline by quarter; and related programs, noting the community trauma response team and updates available at [cityoftacoma.org/CommunitySafety](http://cityoftacoma.org/CommunitySafety).

Discussion ensued regarding excitement for the number of new applicants; budget impact clarification; Crisis Response Improvement Strategy; connection of resources, noting how to request the HOPE team; HOPE team follow-up and case management; frequent users, noting alternative response teams collaboration; multi-lingual incentives for new employees; parameters around data access; allocation of budget; median call duration; breakdown of which calls are co-response calls; and appreciation for the staff's work.

## Other Items of Interest

### 3. [23-0899](#) Council Consideration Request - Tacoma Tree Foundation

Council Member Diaz presented a Council Contingency Request to allocate \$10,000, of Council Contingency Funds to support the purchase of a truck for tree planting and maintenance in the City, noting this contingency fund allocation invests long-term in our tree canopy. She concluded by stating over the past five years, the Tacoma Tree Foundation has distributed 10,000 young trees by borrowing vehicles from their partners and using their personal cars, and this infrastructure will support the work of tree planting and ongoing tree maintenance.

## Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.

## Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

4. [23-0900](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, September 14, 2023

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli stated there are two proclamations and one presentation on tonight's meeting agenda, proclaiming Tuesday, October 10, 2023, as Almond Roca Day, proclaiming September 23–October 1, 2023, as Blue Star Welcoming Week and a presentation on Jobs 253; and there are no expected changes to tonight's agenda.

## Adjournment

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

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Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

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Nicole Emery, City Clerk