TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Kate Larsen, Director, Tacoma Public Library
COPY: Government Performance and Finance Committee (GPFC); Andy Cherullo, Director, Finance; Ted Richardson, Senior Management Fellow, City Manager's Office
PRESENTER: Kate Larsen, Director, Tacoma Public Library
SUBJECT: Tacoma Public Library & Digital Equity
DATE: May 17, 2022

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:
Tacoma Public Library (TPL) will build on their April 19, 2022 presentation at GPFC to provide insights and recommendations for furthering digital equity efforts in Tacoma.

BACKGROUND:
Through leveraging assets and working collaboratively with partners, TPL has made strides in improving digital equity in Tacoma. As requested, this presentation will focus on the potential for further growth. At the April 19, 2022 GPFC meeting, staff presented a review of the digital equity work already happening at TPL, such as free computer use and printing, day to day tech help, formal technology classes, circulating wifi hotspots and podcast kits, and other ways of offering skill building for job seekers. Staff also reviewed their exciting partnership projects with the University of Washington, Black Brilliance Research, and the Tacoma Cooperative Network.

ISSUE:
The pandemic has shown that many of the go-to digital inclusion approaches — including reliance on physical spaces for offering digital access — are not viable as long-term solutions. To better meet the daily digital needs of students, families, workers and small businesses, libraries must actively and intentionally lead the charge to increase awareness of the digital divide's impact across their communities and spearhead collective action to make progress on achieving digital equity.

ALTERNATIVES:
This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:
This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:
This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.