



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: City Council Member Conor McCarthy
COPY: Mayor and City Council, City Clerk
SUBJECT: **Resolution – Tacoma Permit Advisory Group – May 3, 2022**
DATE: April 28, 2022

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution to transition the Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force to the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group.
[Council Member McCarthy]

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members John Hines, Conor McCarthy, and Sarah Rumbaugh

BACKGROUND:

The Council Member’s Recommendation is Based On:

The City Council adopted Resolution 39894 which formally established the TPATF in December 2017. In December 2019, City Council adopted Resolution 40531, removing member restrictions from the Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force to allow the City Manager flexibility in appointing representatives as appropriate.

The City of Tacoma describes a Task Force as: A task force is a body appointed by the City Council to study or work on a particular subject or problem. The formal definition indicates that a task force is "a temporary grouping under one leader for the purpose of accomplishing a definite objective." Often a task force will cease to exist upon completion of its charge as given by the City Council. The Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force has evolved to do continuous work in collaboration with City staff. In addition to reviewing specific practices and policies related to City of Tacoma permitting, they are asked for advice on upcoming legislation and changes at the City. This broader scope is beyond the role of a Task Force.

The TPATF reviewed the various types of volunteer organizations currently run by the City, including committees, boards, commissions, task forces, and advisory groups. Their recommendation is to transition TPATF into the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group. This new structure would formalize their existing work, and imbed membership and recruitment standards more in alignment with the City of Tacoma’s equity goals.

The Advisory Group would consist of 18 members, under the following categories:

- At-large stakeholders (7)
- Development stakeholders (11)
 - Hospitality
 - Retail
 - Healthcare
 - Public Sector
 - Residential Contractor/Developer
 - Commercial Contractor/Developer
 - Land Use Attorney
 - Urban Design
 - Architect



- Civil Engineer
- Affordable Housing
- Within these 18 positions, each Council District should be represented by at least one member who resides in that district.
- Members should be representative of a broad base of permit applicants or other development stakeholders who routinely apply for permits or engage directly with City staff on development proposals, with an emphasis placed on membership working in and/or living in the City of Tacoma. By January 1, 2025, it is the intention of the Council that at least half of the membership reside in the City of Tacoma. If this goal is not attained, then the Council will review membership criteria and make changes as necessary.
- Each member will be appointed for a 2-year term, for a maximum of three terms (six years total)

Recruitment, application and selection process:

- Information on how to apply to join the advisory group would be included on the group's website. The application would be a simplified process run by advisory group staff instead of the clerk's office. When positions become available, the City of Tacoma would issue a news release. Additional outreach would be performed by advisory group volunteers and staff as capacity allows. Staff should work with the intent to add diversity and enhance equity in the current membership.
- Application materials would be reviewed by the advisory group chair, co-chairs, and staff, with the potential for candidate interviews, culminating in a recommendation to the City Manager for appointment. The City Manager would have final authority to appoint members.
- New members would serve for a two-year term. They would have an on-boarding meeting with Task Force staff and would be required to complete public disclosure training.

The duties and responsibilities of the Advisory Group will be:

1. Make Permit System Recommendations: Meet monthly with City staff to review, discuss, and provide recommendations to City Manager and City Council for the improvement of City policies, codes, and procedures for the issuance of residential and commercial permits. Review best practices in peer communities. Monitor implementation progress and recommend adjustments.
2. Review City Policies Under Consideration: Review and provide recommendations to the City Manager and City Council regarding proposed City policies and laws which affect the development code and the permitting system.
3. Establish Guiding Principles: Establish guiding principles to guide policy and best practice recommendations made by the Advisory Group.

The TPATF acknowledges that all volunteer groups at the City of Tacoma will incorporate policy recommendations in response to Resolution 40622, passed in 2020 by the City Council, directing the City Manager to create an Equitable and Anti-Racist Tacoma. This may lead to changes in CBC and other volunteer group structures, including the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:



The TPATF discussed this recommendation at the January, February and March 2022 TPATF meetings. Their recommendation is that the City Council sponsor a resolution to transition the Task Force into an Advisory Group. The Advisory Group model maintains desired flexibility and adaptability, while creating a structure that is designed to be long-term and sustainable.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)

As an Advisory Group, this volunteer body will continue to review City of Tacoma permitting processes collaboratively with City staff in order to improve the process and make permitting accessible to all residents of Tacoma and businesses doing work in Tacoma. Including the perspective of individuals and businesses applying for permits in permit policy discussions provides the opportunity to refine policy and avoid unintended consequences that could push out small or disadvantaged businesses unnecessarily.

Economy/Workforce: Equity Index Score: Select Index Score.

Increase the number of infrastructure projects and improvements that support existing and new business developments.

Increase positive public perception related to the Tacoma economy.

Civic Engagement: Equity Index Score: Select an Index Score.

Increase the number of residents who participate civically through volunteering and voting.

Elected officials, boards, commissions, and volunteer leadership will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s)?

Formalizing the membership structure will ensure diverse perspectives and subject matter expertise is included in these critical discussions and will make sure the Advisory Group reflects the diversity of individuals engaging with City of Tacoma permitting processes. Formalizing recruitment of new members will include increased transparency of openings and increased efforts to connect with individuals not currently in the network of Task Force members. The resolution also directly calls on staff to work with the intent to add diversity and enhance equity in the current membership.

ALTERNATIVES:

Presumably, your recommendation is not the only potential course of action; please discuss other alternatives or actions that City Council or staff could take. Please use table below.

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. Take no action	Minimize resources needed to support volunteer organizations in Tacoma	Unclear expectations of the TPATF would persist, and recruitment and appointment of membership would remain unformalized
2. Dissolve the TPATF	Would increase staff capacity for other City priorities	The City would lose the subject matter expertise and dedicated volunteer base currently providing



		perspective on engaging with our permitting process
3. Transition the TPATF to a different volunteer group	Further formalize the work of this group, possibly bring it in alignment with other City systems	Reduce flexibility of this volunteer group and potentially create very long processes for volunteer recruitment that are detrimental to filling open positions

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

If passed, staff will work with current TPATF membership to match each member up to a membership category. Each existing member would be considered to begin their first term as an advisory group member, with a maximum of 3 terms (totally 6 years) allowed to them. Staff would create a recruitment process to fill additional vacant membership positions, working collaboratively with current members while also seeking to add diversity and enhance equity in the current membership.

An update from the Tacoma Permit Advisory Group should be scheduled at a Council Committee in 2023 to review the group’s workplan and implementation of new recruitment and appointment processes.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Sponsors recommend adopting the recommendation brought forth by the Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force by passing this resolution transitioning this volunteer body to an Advisory Group.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.