



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

**TO:** Mayor & City Council  
**FROM:** Council Member Kiara Daniels and Council Policy Analyst Christina Caan  
**COPIES TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Bill Fosbre, City Attorney  
**SUBJECT:** **A Resolution acknowledging the devastating impact of gun violence in our country and in Tacoma; naming the disparity of those impacts on Black youths, boys, and children; affirming the City of Tacoma's ongoing commitment to decreasing violence in our community; and directing the City Manager to implement a range of immediate actions related to bolstering community safety and the wellbeing of Tacoma's youth. - Requested for May 16, 2023**

**DATE:** May 3, 2023

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**I ask for your support for a Resolution acknowledging the devastating impact of gun violence in our country and in Tacoma; naming the disparity of those impacts on Black youths, boys, and children; affirming the City of Tacoma's ongoing commitment to decreasing violence in our community; and directing the City Manager to implement a range of immediate actions related to bolstering community safety and the wellbeing of Tacoma's youth.**

**LEGISLATIVE INTENT:**

**Resolution Request:** In alignment with the commitment the City of Tacoma and our ongoing partnership with Tacoma Public Schools, Metro Parks, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and other community stakeholders and partners to advance efforts to address youth violence, the proposed resolution directs the City Manager to take several immediate actions:

- Provide \$200,000 in funding for safe space for youth and \$100,000 in funding for youth programming for the summer of 2023.
- Ensure that the ongoing work to create a Community Safety Plan includes an effort to: 1) identify a set of data-driven goals for reducing gun violence in Tacoma and disrupting the cycle of violence affecting young people, 2) identify pathways beyond policing to help achieve strategic outcomes and violence prevention, and 3) place a priority focus on youths of color, boys, and those ages 12-18.
- Research the feasibility of enhancing efforts to prevent legally purchased firearms from being used illegally by or against youths, such as increasing the accessibility of gun safes and trigger locks, and to evaluate whether there are unrealized or underutilized opportunities in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, signed into law in June 2022, that could help curb the spread of unlawfully obtained firearms in Tacoma.
- Undertake efforts to partner with public policy research organizations on youth asset mapping and work toward expanding community partnerships and programming specific to violence prevention among male youths of color who are ages 12-18.

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: May 16, 2023

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND:**

Youths in our country are experiencing surging levels of gun violence, creating a dire crisis that reached alarming new heights in 2020, when gun violence became the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of eighteen.<sup>12</sup> Nationally, gun violence has shown no signs of being a temporary phenomenon among American youths and has risen steadily and sharply throughout the past decade. Gun violence is, however, affecting American youths in disparate ways. Black children, as of 2021, were about five times more likely to die from gunfire than their white counterparts.<sup>3</sup> In addition, boys and those ages 12-17 account for the vast majority of gun-related deaths.

Illegally obtained firearms and lapses in safe storage are fueling gun violence across the country and, in Tacoma, stolen guns are ending up the hands of our youth. The Tacoma Police Department reports that a gun is stolen from a vehicle every 57 hours in the City, with 51 guns reported stolen this year.<sup>4</sup> In 2021, ten percent of children in Tacoma Public Schools participating in the Healthy Youth Survey thought it would be easy to get access to a gun.<sup>56</sup> As of 2021, approximately 30 million children in the United States lived in households with firearms and at least 4.6 million lived in a household with loaded and unlocked firearms.<sup>7</sup>

Gun violence has far-reaching consequences for our country and our City. Gun violence not only irrevocably change or cut short lives, but it also traumatizes perpetrators, witnesses, and families, while stoking stress, fear, and anxiety in our schools and neighborhoods.

In Tacoma, we have experienced an alarming year-over-year increase in youth deaths due to gun violence. In response and at the convening of Mayor Woodards, representatives from concerned government agencies, including Tacoma, Pierce County and its Juvenile Court, Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Schools, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and Pierce Transit, have been meeting to discuss shared concerns and a collaborative approach to this important issue. This resolution seeks to capture the outcomes of those conversations to date.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):**

Tacoma Public School youths who are ages 12-18 years old will benefit directly from this proposal by receiving new options for safe locations and healthy programming hosted by partner organizations from 5:00-10:00pm. Parents and family members will benefit from this proposal by having greater options for ensuring safe locations for children during the summer. Simultaneous to this expanded programming, the City will be developing a Community Safety Plan to guide sustained action. The creation of the plan will include both understanding past feedback the community has shared as well as additional community outreach.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Frosch and Zusha Elinson, "Juvenile Crime Surges, Reversing Long Decline. 'It's Just Kids Killing Kids,'" Wall Street Journal, January 23, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Underlying Causes of Death 1999-2020," CDC WONDER Online Database.

<sup>3</sup> John Gramlich, "Gun deaths among U.S. children and teens rose 50 percent in two years," Pew Research Center, April 6, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Tacoma Police Department Press Release, "Guns Still Being Stolen From Vehicles in Tacoma," May 2, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Erica Zucco, "Tacoma police caution parents as incidents of guns on campus pop up," King 5 News, June 4, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, "Youth & Young Adult Violence Assessment: City of Tacoma," August 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Miller, MD; Deborah Azrael, Ph.D, "Firearm Storage in US Households With Children Findings From the 2021 National Firearm Survey," February 22, 2022.

**2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**Equity and Accessibility:**

According to national data, Black children, as of 2021, were about five times more likely to die from gunfire than their white counterparts.<sup>8</sup> Expanding safe summertime locations and programming for Tacoma Public School students is an immediate way we can support our partners in providing healthy alternatives to violent activity.

**Education:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase the availability and accessibility of early childhood education programs.

Increase the number of quality out of school time learning opportunities distributed equitably across the city.

**Livability:** *Equity Index Score:* Very High Opportunity

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

This Resolution will improve equity in education and livability by ensuring Tacoma is addressing immediate community needs for violence prevention and working to ensure longer-term efforts are being focused on advancing data-driven goals and improving perceptions of safety as part of the overall Community Safety Plan. In addition, opening summer safe sites will help improve access and activities available to all Tacoma Public School youths at a time when schools are not traditionally open.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

| Alternative                          | Positive Impacts   | Negative Impacts  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. No action.                        | Preserves funds for other related programming. Allows greater flexibility in identifying priority populations for the Community Safety Plan. | The City would be relying on standard annual funding and approaches in response to the rise in youth violence. Without City funding, partner agencies would be further constrained in their goal to provide safe space sites for Tacoma youths or programming for the safe space sites this summer. |
| 2. Provide greater level of funding. | Additional funding could help expand this summer’s program or extend the program into 2024.  | The Community Safety Plan underway this year will provide additional guidance for funding investments, including priorities for addressing community-directed safety priorities. Expanding funding in advance of that work could result in investments out of alignment                             |

<sup>8</sup> John Gramlich, “Gun deaths among U.S. children and teens rose 50 percent in two years,” Pew Research Center, April 6, 2023.

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|  |  | with the City's long-term priorities. |
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**EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:**

The funds provided for summer safe sites are being given on a one-time basis, but City officials will continue conversations with Tacoma Public Schools, Metro Parks, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and other key stakeholders and partners to ensure that summer programming is designed with a focus on at-risk youth. Simultaneous to this expanded programming, the City will be developing a Community Safety Plan to direct and guide additional efforts. The City will also look to draw on the Community Safety Plan's evaluation of strategic goals to ensure funding is aligned with priority objectives.

**SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The sponsor recommends approval.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This resolution will direct a total of \$300,000 to support safe space and programming for youth as a part of the actions the City Manager would be directed to take.

**If you have a question related to the Council Contingency Fund Request, please contact Council Policy Analyst Christina Caan at 253.219.0679 or ccaan@cityoftacoma.org.**



SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Council Member Daniels**

**SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS SIGNATURES (2 SIGNATURES ONLY)**

- 1.    \_\_\_ *Victoria R. Woodards*    \_\_\_ POS# Mayor \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.    \_\_\_ *Kristina Walker*        \_\_\_ POS# 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.    \_\_\_ *Colt*                        \_\_\_ POS# 4 \_\_\_\_\_