



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, Interim City Manager
FROM: Brad Forbes, Management Analyst-II, City Manager's Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution – Requesting the Tacoma Public Utility Board to develop a plan to increase the use of residential solar in the City of Tacoma.
DATE: April 6, 2017

SUMMARY:

A resolution requesting the Tacoma Public Utility Board develop a plan to increase the use of residential solar power in the City of Tacoma. The intent for this plan is for new residential solar energy to be equitably dispersed throughout Tacoma.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members: Campbell, Ibsen and Thoms

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

This resolution best aligns with the City Council's Strategic Policy Priorities to:

- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs; and,
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.

BACKGROUND:

Solar energy is a sustainable way to deliver electricity to private homes but can involve significant costs, particularly at installation. These systems derive clean, pure energy directly from the sun and help reduce our society's dependence on fossil fuels. With high installation costs, lower-income Tacoma residents often do not have easy access to the benefits of residential solar energy, leaving this technology inequitably dispersed throughout our community.

At the April 4, 2017 Study Session, Council Member Campbell shared a Council Consideration Request proposing City Council consideration of a resolution requesting that the Tacoma Public Utility Board write a plan to increase the use of residential solar energy in the City of Tacoma. The purpose of the plan will be to address economic inequity so there can be an equitable increase in the number of residential solar users from all income levels.

ISSUE:

Article 8 Section 10 of the Washington State Constitution and RCW 35.92.360 prohibit the use of public funds for any purpose which results in a conversion from one energy source to another; therefore, this resolution requests the Tacoma Public Utility Board develop a plan to increase residential solar energy within the legal guidelines.



ALTERNATIVES:

The council could choose to not adopt this proposed Resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

The recommendation is that the City Council adopts the Resolution to request the Tacoma Public Utility Board to develop a plan to equitably increase the use of residential solar energy in the City of Tacoma.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this request of the Public Utility Board to develop a plan.