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2018 City of Tacoma State Legislative Agenda

Economic development:

- The City supports the use of economic development tools that facilitate urban redevelopment and encourage new development, including affordable housing. This includes, but is not limited to, incentives for downtown commercial office construction or rehabilitation, tax increment financing, and restored funding of existing tools such as local infrastructure financing.
- The Legislature has begun a study concerning establishment of a jobs investment fund that would provide financial support for certain types of public economic development projects. The City supports continued examination of this idea as a means to make it easier to finance projects which attract or create jobs throughout the state.
- The Legislature has proposed sale of the Rhodes building complex in downtown Tacoma. The City supports low cost transfer of this property to the City for future downtown economic development opportunities.
- Cross laminate timber is a building technology that shows promise and has been proposed for use in some Tacoma projects. The City supports legislation directing the State Building Code Council to authorize the use of CLT for construction of mid-rise buildings in Washington.

Environment:

- The City supports creation of a sustainable funding source to assist local governments with obligations under Federal storm water regulations. Funding should encourage innovation to meet permit goals for water quality and quantity.
- The State is considering investments in projects that reduce greenhouse gases. The City encourages the Legislature to prioritize these investments in proven programs such as complete streets, fixes to existing infrastructure, and expediting major transit projects.

Fiscal:

- The City believes local control of tax and regulatory processes is in the best interest of city residents and businesses. Local control allows innovation and greater flexibility to match taxes and regulations to a changing local economy. Local control also means allowing the City more authority over its local taxes, such as business and utility taxes. The City supports removing existing State controls over these taxes to allow the City to become less dependent on shared revenue from the State and will oppose legislation that attempts to further restrict City revenue authority.

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- The City supports changes to the 1 percent cap on property tax collections that will allow growth in revenue year over year of up to the rate of inflation in Washington. The City also seeks full restoration of liquor taxes taken by the State and a greater share of tax collections from recreational marijuana sales.
- Property owned by a municipality is exempt from property tax so the Legislature established the leasehold excise tax for the privilege of occupying or using publicly owned real estate. The Tacoma Dome and the Seattle Center lease space to food and craft vendors, arts organizations, ticket vendors and concessionaires that must currently pay 12.84% of their rent to the State while Safeco Field and CenturyLink Field have been exempted from this tax, allowing them a competitive advantage for events. The City will join with the City of Seattle to seek exemption from the leasehold tax for these facilities.

Human Rights:

- Affordable housing provides medium and long term housing solutions to individuals and families at risk of homelessness. The City supports state policies that incentivize affordable housing and programs to prevent homelessness and to address the needs of those who become homeless. These include eliminating sunsets in the current document recording fees earmarked for homelessness programs, increasing the existing \$58 surcharge, and securing greater flexibility for use of real estate excise and sales taxes for housing programs.

Policies that protect consumers and support families also reduce homelessness. The City supports wide adoption of programs for family stability based on the successful McCarver Housing Program. The City supports workplace skills and financial literacy programs for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Many other local government agencies are dealing with the same issues concerning homelessness as Tacoma. The City will look for ways to maximize legislative success by working collaboratively with these agencies wherever practicable.

Neighborhoods:

- A recent Supreme Court ruling limited the authority of financial institutions to initiate foreclosure. The City will work with financial institutions to restore some of this authority if long-standing concerns of local government about the impacts on neighborhoods of the long foreclosure process are addressed.

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- Unit-price contracting authority will provide more efficient responses to many City services, including securing abandoned properties and any subsequent mitigation actions. The City supports changes to unit-price contracting law similar to that granted to PUD's.
- Restrictive property covenants often contain language that is illegal under Washington's anti-discrimination law. While void, this language remains visible in certain property documents. The State provides a means for home owner associations to mark such language as void. The City supports legislation that will allow any property owner to file a non-judicial procedure to mark such language on any title document as void.

Transportation:

- Despite recent approval of robust funding proposals at the state and local levels, serious infrastructure funding needs remain. In Tacoma and throughout Washington there are heavily used aging local bridges that need significant repair or replacement. The Puyallup River Bridge carries over 30,000 cars per day even with existing load limits. After a decade of applying, the City has acquired partial grant funding to replace two segments of the bridge. The remaining six segments will require \$100 million more. Existing grant programs are inadequate to provide this level of funding. The state needs to provide new tools, which may include tolling, to help local governments preserve existing transportation infrastructure.
- The City supports adoption of authority to create a fee based street utility. Similar funding mechanisms are in use in other states and result in a much higher level of citizen satisfaction with the maintenance of local streets.
- Voters in Tacoma and throughout the region approved the Sound Transit 3 ballot measure. The City will oppose legislative efforts to undermine this approval and thereby delay or cancel projects promised to the voters of the City. The City will also oppose attempts to change the governance structure of Sound Transit.
- Transportation network companies (TNCs) have sought legislation that restricts city authority to regulate their businesses, which compete with the regulated legacy taxi companies operating in cities. The City will oppose restrictions on background checks, local authority to license, and set fees or taxes for operation of TNC's.
- Passenger only ferries are increasingly viewed as important options for travel in the congested Puget Sound area and for providing resiliency for our transportation infrastructure. The City supports the State sharing in funding of a comprehensive study of the cost and ridership of potential routes in the region and supports options for governance of such systems.