



City of Tacoma

Mayor Victoria Woodards

September __, 2018

Senator Jeannie Darneille
Senator Steve O'Ban
Senator Steve Conway
Representative Laurie Jenkins
Representative Jake Fey
Representative Dick Muri
Representative Christine Kilduff
Representative David Sawyer
Representative Steve Kirby

Re: Washington State Department of Transportation owned lands within and surrounding the City of Tacoma

Dear City of Tacoma's State Legislative Delegation,

On behalf of the Tacoma City Council, I am writing to request your assistance to ensure the proper care and management of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owned lands within and surrounding the City of Tacoma.

The City regularly receives complaints regarding WSDOT owned property, mostly related to significant presence of trash, debris, and graffiti, lack of vegetation maintenance, lack of maintenance of public space, and ongoing homeless encampments. The City forwards these complaints with WSDOT and also provides Tacoma residents with information to report concerns directly to WSDOT. While the Tacoma Police Department and Public Works staff meet monthly with WSDOT staff to collaborate on various ongoing concerns, there still is little or no responsive action by WSDOT, resulting in an inadequate, unsustainable approach to maintaining WSDOT land in our City.

According to WSDOT, lack of funding is impacting their ability to appropriately attend to property they own within the City of Tacoma. Although WSDOT contracts with a private business and deploys work crews to perform limited cleanups when the need is acute and high profile, this approach does not keep up with community need. One specific example is over the

dry summer months unmanaged vegetation on WSDOT property presents an increased risk of brush fires near homes in our community.

Additionally, private contracted workers are unable to clean up biohazardous materials, such as needles, or areas where there are occupied or unoccupied encampments. Unmaintained WSDOT property is contributing to the current public health emergency that is happening in the City of Tacoma. In fact, the City has been told that encampment cleanup ranks as one of WSDOT's lowest priorities.

WSDOT-owned property in these areas are frequently reported by City residents to be of concern:

- 56th & Alaska Park and Ride
- I-705
- SR-16 infrastructure visible from Center Street
- SR-7
- SR-509
- E. 40th and 'C' Street
- Multiple locations at 19th and Orchard (near China Lake Park and the Boy Scouts building)
- S. 12th and SR-16
- Various locations along the Scott Pierson Trail
- S. 27th and Union Avenue
- S. 28th and Pacific
- Pugnetti Park
- 84th & Hosmer (County jurisdiction, does impact our residents)

Like every other property owner in the City of Tacoma, WSDOT has an obligation to comply with Municipal Codes. Additionally, government agencies are required to maintain our public lands, to ensure they do not become a blight on the communities we serve. As Mayor of Tacoma, I would like to partner with one or more of our City's legislative delegation to arrange a meeting with WSDOT Officials, State Legislators, and City Councilmembers to discuss what policy solutions can be found to address the ongoing need to maintain WSDOT-owned land in Tacoma and beyond.

You can contact my office by calling 253.591.5125 or emailing my Office Administrator Samantha Kaaumao at SKAAUAMO@ci.tacoma.wa.us.

Sincerely

Victoria Woodards
Mayor of Tacoma

CC: Jeff Hastings, WSDOT Tacoma Maintenance Superintendent
Troy Cowan, WSDOT Asst. Region Administrator for Maintenance & Operations