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**SUBJECT:** Filling Vacant Council Positions  
**DATE:** December 11, 2018

**PRESENTATION TYPE:**  
Informational Briefing

**SUMMARY:**

The City Attorney's Office will present a proposed process for filling open city council positions (both formally vacant or when an extended leave of absence has been approved) to be added to the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

**BACKGROUND:**

Both Washington State law and the Tacoma City Charter provide legal authority for the Council to fill open city council positions; however, these laws do not mandate a specific process to be used. A number of cities have adopted formal process rules for filling open positions, which are efficient, transparent and provide consistency.

**ISSUE:**

Council does not have a standard process for filling open city council positions; consequently, an ad hoc process has been used each time the Council has an open position (formally vacant or when an extended leave of absence has been approved) over the past decade, which has caused confusion among potential applicants, the public, Council and the media.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The Council can continue to use an ad hoc approach; however, the approach does not provide certainty or transparency to the process.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The proposed process would incur advertising costs associated with advertising an open city council position in the City's official newspaper for two week period.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Rules of Procedure of the Council should be amended to include standard process for filling open city council positions. The process should include procedures for filling positions formally vacant, and in those circumstances when the Council desires to fill a position where an extended leave of absence of 90 days or greater has been approved by the Council.