



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Bucoda Warren, Senior Management Fellow, City Manager’s Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution – Creating the Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma – Requested for December 10
DATE: November 25, 2019

SUMMARY:

A resolution creating the Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma to advise on policies, codes, plans, and practices through a youth lens; provide a platform for youth engagement in policy making decisions and local government; appointing the founding leadership team; and directing the City Manager to provide staff support.

Commission Assignment:

The Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma will:

- Serve as an inclusive platform for youth to engage their local government and represent the youth of Tacoma.
- Review existing programs and initiatives and recommend policies, actions, and plans to the City Council that incorporate youth voice in the implementation and development.
- Recommend new initiatives, policies, and programs that support youth voice and access to government in Tacoma.
- Make comment and recommendations on policies considered and adopted by the City Council.
- Recruit and encourage youth participation on other boards and commissions
- Have a role in Student Government Day and related events that engage students in local government.
- Hold public hearings as needed to seek diverse youth input on community issues.
- Engage partner organizations to connect students to resources and programs.

Composition:

The Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma will be composed of any number of youth, defined as being of middle or high school age, who live, attend school, or are engaged in the city. These Youth will annually elect a 10-member leadership team that represents the diversity of Tacoma who will represent them and will be presented to and be confirmed by the City Council. The committees and operations of the Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma and operating rules will be set by their bylaws.

The founding members elected by their peers on June 15, 2019 to serve a 1-year term to expire June 30, 2020 are listed below.

- Rosemary Sissel, Commission Chair
- Yasmin Aref, Commission Vice Chair
- Huyen-Tram Nguyen, Outreach and Budget Chair
- Stella Keating, Outreach and Budget Vice Chair
- Ethan Quinones, Justice and Safety Chair
- Rowan Ali, Justice and Safety Vice Chair
- Ian Fredrickson, Education, Arts, and Culture Chair
- Emma Robinson, Education, Arts, and Culture Vice Chair
- Maizy Green, Social and Environmental Health Chair
- Taylor Jackson, Social and Environmental Health Vice Chair



Meetings:

The Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma will meet at least twice a month: a general assembly that engages all members in activities that further their mission and creates educational opportunities, and a leadership meeting in which the elected leaders will discuss the budget and direction of the youth commission, and policies, actions, or plans to recommend to the City Council. The leadership team may establish additional meetings or subcommittee meetings to achieve their mission.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards, Council Members Mello, Blocker, and Hunter.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The requested resolution 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.
- Encourage thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.
- Ensure Tacoma residents are engaged participants in making Tacoma a well-run city.

BACKGROUND:

Youth engagement in municipal governance allows young community members the opportunity to increase and strengthen their capacity for knowledge, leadership and action skills; understand and become more aware of issues and root causes, systems, strategies for change, commitment and a sense of responsibility; opportunity to act on passion, use skills, and generate change through relevant sustained action.

Across the country, municipal leaders are discovering one of their greatest assets—the youth of their city. Increasingly, youth are working with elected officials and city managers to address the issues of local government. In recent years, the uptick of youth engagement has shown that more young people are discovering their voice matters. They are discovering that they can support positive change in their community by being civically engaged. City leadership is finding that when they provide meaningful opportunities for youth engagement, more youth participate and encourage their peers to do so as well. In addition to engaging the next generation of civic leaders, cities already using this approach have realized many of the following benefits:

- Increased support for city initiatives such as student government day— involving youth and their families in different aspects of city planning allows for stronger and well- informed partnerships.
- Improved policies and programs for youth – youth driven policies and initiatives can better capture what does and does not work for their peers.
- Improved indicators of well-being – civic participation and engagement foster productive attitudes into adulthood and increase the likelihood of voting, volunteering and becoming valuable members of the workforce.

ISSUE:

Mayor Woodards has advocated for youth voice in government, insisting they should be part of the important decisions being made now that will affect them. In October of 2018, staff convened youth-serving stakeholders to get feedback and guidance on how to achieve this vision through a Youth Commission. Following a recruitment effort to fill 16 seats, the stakeholders were convened again to help select members from an applicant pool of 126 students across Tacoma. With so many students wanting to be involved, it was suggested that the process be opened to all. With that recommendation, all 126 students were invited to join the Mayor’s Youth Engagement Task Force, which kicked off in January of 2019.



For the first six months of 2019, students from across Tacoma came together once a month for a full day of engagement to discuss what changes they wanted to see in Tacoma and how they would achieve those changes. Through this learning and engagement, the students recommended changes to formalize the task force. These changes included:

- Rename the task force to the Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma
- Create four policy area subcommittees
- Elect a leadership team that would be responsible for communicating with the City and leading the committees and other members
- Formalize the Commission and create opportunities for students to engage in policy
- Use the Youth Commission as a body to support getting more youth engaged in leadership positions on other boards and commissions.

Since starting their work, these students have already started creating change in Tacoma. They have helped place a youth member on the Commission on Disabilities, they have worked directly with Metro Parks Tacoma to do the community outreach around Gas Station Park and even held an event in the park to bring awareness to the park. Adopting this resolution would create an official platform for youth to engage government and provide valuable feedback to the City Council and staff so we can better understand how our policies may affect them, and support them as they become more civically minded.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose to modify or not support the requested resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt the resolution as presented establishing the Mayor’s Youth Commission of Tacoma.

FISCAL IMPACT:

\$25,000 has been allocated to fund a temporary position jointly with the Foundation for Tacoma Students during the mid-biennium modification process. This money will support a 1-year project position that will work with the



City Manager’s Office to support the youth commission and serve as a pilot to determine what future staffing and partnerships may be most beneficial to the Mayor’s Youth Commission.

Expenditures:

Fund Number & Fund Name	Cost Object (cc/wbs/order)	Cost Element	Total Amount
0010 General Fund	90015974	5310100	25,000
Total			25,000

Revenues

Fund Number & Fund Name	Cost Object (cc/wbs/order)	Cost Element	Total Amount
0010 General Fund	90015974	6311010	25,000
Total			25,000

Fiscal Impact to Current Biennial Budget: \$25,000

Are the Expenditures and Revenues Planned and Budgeted? Yes.