

# CITY OF TACOMA 2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

### **Northwest ICE Processing Center**

The Northwest ICE Processing Center, located in the Tacoma tide flats, is an immigration detention facility operated by GEO Group, a for-profit corporation that contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The City Council shares concern expressed by the Tacoma community for the health, safety, and welfare of detainees held in the facility. The City joins other stakeholders in requesting the State Legislature to take immediate action to address these concerns:

- *Clarification that the NW ICE Processing Center is not an essential public facility:* In 2018, the City implemented local zoning regulations that prevent the Northwest ICE Processing Center from expanding to accommodate additional detainee capacity. GEO group has legally challenged these regulations, arguing that the Center is an essential public facility. The City requests that the Legislature clarify that privately-operated detention facilities are not essential public facilities, thereby resolving the litigation and upholding the local zoning regulations.
- *Regulatory Oversight & Ban of Privately-Operated Detention:* The City supports efforts to immediately bring transparency, accountability, and oversight to the operations of the Northwest ICE Processing Center and eliminate privately operated detention centers as an immigration enforcement option in Washington State.

### **Affordable Housing**

#### **Tacoma Housing Affordability By-The-Numbers**

- Home prices have increased by 33% from March 2016 – March 2018. During that same time frame, rents have increased by 17% for an apartment.
- 40% of our renter households pay over 30% of their gross monthly income for housing. 16% of these cost burdened households pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs.
- For every 100 very low-income households in Tacoma there are only 45 affordable units.
- The amount of homeless families and people on our streets unsheltered is rapidly increasing, estimate at about 1,600 persons per night.

The City adopted an Affordable Housing Action Strategy to create new housing, keep existing housing affordable, help community members stay in current housing, and reduce barriers to

individuals accessing housing. The City requests that the State Legislature provide the City Council with enhanced tools for achieving the goals of the Affordable Housing Action Strategy, including local option funding mechanisms for the city-operated Housing Trust Fund and expansion of the multi-family property tax exemption for units that are retained as affordable housing. Additionally, the City will monitor legislation that makes amendments to the Residential Landlord Tenant Act, including just-cause eviction.

### **Transportation**

*Street Maintenance and Preservation:* Prior to the passage of I-976, the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) released a report on city transportation revenue and highlighted Tacoma as a case study. The JTC report states that Tacoma’s street maintenance backlog is approximately four times the size of its annual budget. This need is further exacerbated by the passage of I-976, which the City anticipates will reduce revenue by \$2.9 million a year, or 12% of the City’s street maintenance budget. The City requests that the Legislature provide enhanced tools for cities to meet local street maintenance needs, including councilmanic local options.

*Passenger-Only Ferry Service:* Authorization for the city to provide passenger-only ferry service, allowing the City to proceed forward with developing a passenger-only ferry investment plan. The development of this plan would advance forward simultaneous to the completion of the PRSC regional study on passenger-only ferry service.

*Project Requests:* As the Legislature develops a revenue package, the City requests that the following projects receive funding:

- **\$650,000 to complete the Access Revision Report to provide an offramp from I-5 to the Tacoma Mall Regional Center**
- \$110 million to fund the \$140 million effort to complete improvements to Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge
- The City requests additional funding to construct the Schuster Parkway Promenade. To finalize project vision, the City requests that \$1 million of the \$4 million appropriated be advanced:
  - o Current: \$2 million in 21-23 and \$2 million in 23-25.
  - o Request: \$3 million in 21-23 and \$1 million in 23-25.

### **Tacoma Dome Investments**

The City requests that the State Legislature allocate \$2 million in capital funding to renovate the men’s and women’s restrooms and kitchen at the Tacoma Dome.

## **Additional Support/Oppose/Monitor Legislative Issues for General Government**

### **Public Works Department**

*I-5 Corridor:* The Washington State Department of Transportation recently submitted a federal BUILD grant to assess various scenarios to improve performance of I-5 from Marysville to Tumwater. The City supports advancing the work of the I-5 System Partnership, and supports expanding on the work of the proposed BUILD grant to address crossing in other communities. **The City asks that pedestrian and bicycle connectivity crossing the corridor east-west be explored as part of this study.**

*Automated license plate reader technology:* The City supports legislation that regulates automated license plate reader technology but will oppose provisions that would negatively impact the City's parking enforcement program.

*Bicycle Signals:* The City supports proposals to allow the use of bicycle signals in state law. The federal government has allowed use of signals which use a bicycle symbol instead of a circular ball or arrow. Washington defines a signal as being a circular ball or arrow, which means we cannot use other shapes.

### **Tacoma Venues and Events Department**

*Online Ticket Sales:* The City joins other venue operators in opposing legislative proposals that negatively impact the City's ability to sell tickets to events at the Tacoma Dome safely and efficiently through the City's current provider, Ticketmaster.

### **Finance Department**

*Local Tax and Licensing authority:* The City opposes legislative proposals that restrict the City's authority to impose a local business & occupation tax and business license requirements.

*Transportation Network Companies:* The City supports statewide regulation of transportation network companies that establishes a regulatory structure that is similar to or more stringent than the City's existing regulations.

*Utility Lien Authority:* The City opposes any efforts to limit the City's ability to collect delinquent utility payments by placing a lien on properties.

### **Neighborhood & Community Services**

*Homeless Encampments:* The City will monitor any legislation to change or enforce policies addressing homeless encampments on public right-of-way. Additionally, the City will continue to implement the budget proviso language directing WSDOT/City of Tacoma to conduct a pilot program to address homeless encampments.

### **Public Safety/Criminal Justice**

*Criminal Justice Reform Legislation:* The Sentencing Guidelines Commission recently issued a report on reforms to the sentencing grid. The City will monitor any legislative proposals that

result from this report, including bail reform, proposals around “three strikes,” and the death penalty.

*Driver’s License Suspensions:* The City of Tacoma supports legislation that establishes a statewide payment system for traffic fines/penalties, removes driver’s license suspension as a remedy for failure to pay traffic fines/penalties, and decriminalizes driving with a suspended license.

*Property Crime:* The City will monitor proposals that address rising property crimes.

*Firearms:* The City will monitor legislation regulating firearms or other proposals to curb gun violence.

*Jail Contracting:* The City supports legislation clarifying that cities are authorized to contract with tribal governments for jail services.

### **Community & Economic Development**

*Economic Development Tools:* The City supports expanded and new economic development tools, including expanding commercial office space development tools, authorizing tax increment financing, local revitalization financing, municipal infrastructure bank options, and other proposals.

*Accessory Dwelling Units:* The City recently implemented an ordinance related to accessory dwelling units. The City opposes any proposals that conflict with its regulations.

*Changes to House Bill 1406:* The City will monitor any proposals making technical or other changes to House Bill 1406 adopted by the Legislature in 2019. The City will oppose any changes that reduce the amount of revenue that the City would be allocated to meet the community’s pressing affordable housing needs.

*Pierce County Mayoral Roundtable on Affordability:* The City supports the efforts of the Pierce County Mayoral Roundtable on Affordability to advocate for policies that keep housing attainable and encourage greater jobs/housing balance in the South Sound region.

### **Energy & Environment**

*Clean Fuel Standard:* The City supports establishing a statewide clean fuel standard.

*Plastic Bag Ban:* The City supports a statewide plastic bag ban.

*Greenhouse Gas Goals:* The City supports statewide efforts to achieve the Paris Climate Accord emission reduction goals and to regularly monitor our progress.

*Product Stewardship and Source Reduction:* The City supports legislation that helps prevent waste and creates opportunities for reuse and recycling markets.

*Clean Transportation and Buildings:* The City supports legislation that encourages more fuel-efficient and alternative-fuel vehicles and clean, healthy, cost effective buildings.

## **Tacoma Public Libraries**

*Firearms in Public Spaces:* Tacoma Public Libraries opposes legislation that would require library employees to enforce regulations prohibiting firearms in public spaces.

*Challenges to Intellectual Freedom:* Tacoma Public Libraries opposes legislation that restricts intellectual freedom.

*Protecting Library Workers:* Tacoma Public Libraries supports protecting library employees in the same manner as all public sector employees (RCW 9A.36.031).

**Metro Parks Tacoma** – The City supports the legislative efforts of Metro Parks Tacoma. Specifically, the City supports:

*Parks and Recreation Funding:* The City supports Metro Parks request to study and identify flexible operating revenues for local parks and recreation agencies, including supporting a bill that would allow parks and recreation agencies to take a .01 percent sales tax increase to their voters.

*Park in South East/Central Tacoma:* The City joins Metro Parks Tacoma in requesting capital funding for the development of a park in South East/Central Tacoma in honor of former Senator Rosa Franklin.

*Foss Waterway Development Authority:* The City joins Metro Parks Tacoma in requesting capital funding for the development of a regional human power boating facility on the Eastside of Foss Waterway.

*Titlow Park Culvert:* The City supports Metro Parks Tacoma in requesting \$1 million in transportation funding for the full design and permitting of the Titlow lagoon restoration BNSF Rail bridge project.

**Tacoma Public Schools** – The City supports the legislative efforts of Tacoma Public Schools, including:

- Funding for Tacoma Public School’s Whole Child effort
- Modifying the prototypical school model for low-income schools
- Funding special education and early learning
- Funding the State Employee Benefits Board
- Modifying the construction bond threshold to a simple majority rather than super majority, and changing the state construction formula to allow Tacoma Public Schools to receive funding

**Tacoma Housing Authority**—The City supports the legislative efforts of Tacoma Housing Authority. Specifically, the City supports:

*Arlington Drive Campus:* The City supports legislative requests and appropriations that support the construction and operation of Tacoma Housing Authority's Arlington Drive Campus to serve youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

## TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

### **Tacoma Power**

*Carbon reduction policies:* Washington lawmakers have indicated that they will continue to focus on legislative solutions aimed at decarbonizing Washington State's economy. TPU will actively engage in and seek to support proposals that decarbonize the economy at reasonable costs to customers and that appropriately acknowledge and credit hydropower as a carbon-free generating resource.

*Support equal treatment of hydropower:* Tacoma Power customers have invested in renewable, carbon-free hydroelectric generating facilities for decades. These facilities will continue to require significant reinvestment to ensure their future safe and reliable operation. During the 2019 Legislative Session, other renewable generating resources were given special tax treatment. TPU will continue to advocate for consistent tax treatment or alternative approaches that support equal treatment of all renewable, carbon-free resources.

### **Tacoma Water**

*Support the Public Works Trust Fund:* More than 6.2 million Washington State residents, 85 percent of the state's population, get their drinking water from public water systems. Nationally, \$4.8 trillion needs to be invested over the next 20 years to support a resilient system and keep up with aging water infrastructure. The Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) is a crucial funding program for many communities around our state providing low-interest loans to help maintain vital public infrastructure. TPU supports public water systems and city partners in their request to fully restore funding to the PWTF.

*Support improvements to the Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act:* The Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act, also referred to as the "Call Before You Dig Law," governs safe excavation practices near underground utility facilities. TPU supports the interim work of the Dig Law Safety Committee to bring forward four changes to update the current law.

### **Tacoma Rail**

*Support funding for East End Locomotive Facility:* The State of Washington administers both a grant program and a loan program designed to support freight rail capital needs. Tacoma Rail has applied for one project under the Freight Rail Assistance Program. If awarded, the funds would be used to help update the East End Locomotive Facility.