



**CITY OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

**TO:** Deputy Mayor Blocker & Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** Mayor Victoria Woodards and Chief Policy Analyst Melanie Harding  
**COPIES TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Tadd Wille, Deputy City Mgr.; Bill Fosbre, City Attorney  
**SUBJECT:** Council Consideration Request: Exploring establishment of a Cultural or Heritage Holiday  
**DATE:** April 15, 2021

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**I ask for your support to explore the establishment of a potential paid cultural or heritage holiday for City of Tacoma staff, beginning with a staff presentation and policy discussion in the Council Government Performance and Finance Committee.**

**LEGISLATIVE INTENT**

**Request for Referral to Committee:** The majority of City employees are provided with 10 paid observed holidays each year, plus 2 floating holidays (totaling 96 hours of paid holiday time each year). This consideration request is to explore establishing an additional paid holiday that staff could use for cultural heritage days.

On June 19, 1865, more than two years after the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation, news reached Galveston, Texas, that the Civil War had ended and enslaved people were now free. That day has been celebrated to commemorate the abolishment of slavery and the contributions of African Americans to society, and is now known as "Juneteenth" and celebrated all across the nation. Forty-seven states recognize Juneteenth as either a holiday or day of observance.

In April 2021, the Washington and Oregon State legislatures each passed legislation marking Juneteenth as paid legal holidays for State employees. Introduced in the current session, Washington Substitute House Bill 1016 (SHB 1016) acknowledges that "Although this day has special significance for Black/African Americans in the state of Washington, the historical and continued harms of slavery and the rejoicing of the end of this atrocity should be acknowledged and celebrated by all Washingtonians."<sup>1</sup> Across the nation, a number of major employers have begun recognizing Juneteenth as a paid holiday<sup>2</sup>.

In 2020 and 2021, a number of local jurisdictions adopted Juneteenth as a paid, legal holiday, including the Port of Seattle; New York City; Columbia, South Carolina; Hackensack, New Jersey; and Portland, Oregon.

In November 2020, King County Council approved legislation adding both Juneteenth (to be observed on June 19) and Indigenous People's Day (to be observed on October 12) to their paid legal holidays.

Noting that there are many unpaid days of cultural, heritage, or religious significance, Mayor Woodards and her co-sponsors submit this consideration request to explore the establishing a potential paid cultural or heritage holiday for City of Tacoma staff, beginning with a staff presentation and policy discussion in the Council Government Performance and Finance Committee (GPFC).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?billnumber=1016&year=2021>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/06/18/juneteenth-2020-corporations-join-observance-holiday-freedom/3182126001/#~:text=Other%20companies%20officially%20observing%20Juneteenth,Buy%2C%20Target%20and%20J.C.%20Penney.>

This consideration request recommends directing the City Manager to include fiscal analysis, impacts to city services, potential organized labor bargaining considerations, feedback from City staff affinity group, and other relevant policy concerns in the presentation provided to GPFC.

DESIRED PRESENTATION DATE: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021

**FUNDING ANALYSIS:**

Fiscal Analysis to be provided as a part of the proposed presentation to GPFC.

**TIMELINE FOR CONSIDERATION:**

☒ Biennial budget

☐ Mid-biennium budget adjustment

☐ Other

**ALIGNMENT WITH TACOMA 2025 KEY FOCUS AREAS:**

This legislation, program, project, or event is best aligned with the following (Check all that apply):

**Education:** *Equity Index Score:* High Opportunity

Increase the number of quality out of school time learning opportunities distributed equitably across the city.

**Civic Engagement:** *Equity Index Score:* N/A

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

**In you have a question related to the Council Consideration Request, please contact Chief Policy Analyst to the Mayor Melanie Harding at 253-591-5156 or [melanie.harding@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:melanie.harding@cityoftacoma.org).**

SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY:



Mayor Victoria Woodards

**SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS SIGNATURES**

*(Signatures demonstrate support to initiate discussion and consideration of the subject matter by City Council for potential policy development and staff guidance/direction.)*

1. 

POS# 1

2. 

POS# 3

3. 

POS# 4