



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

TO: Mayor & City Council
FROM: Council Member Kristina Walker and Council Assistant Claire Goodwin
COPIES TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Tadd Wille, Deputy City Manager; Bill Fosbre, City Attorney
SUBJECT: **Community Prioritization for Housing and Preventing Displacement of Residents**
DATE: November 4, 2021

I ask for your support for a Resolution that affirms the City of Tacoma supports the use of data-informed tools, such as community prioritization, to prevent displacement of local residents and strongly encourages the City’s partners to use these tools to ensure more residents are able to stay in Tacoma with a focus on households from “low” and “very low” opportunity areas of the City as defined by the Equity Index as well as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) households. Further, I ask for your support to direct the City Manager to evaluate options to assist in preventing displacement of residents.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT:

Resolution/Ordinance Request: Displacement of long-time residents in Tacoma, especially in high-precarity neighborhoods, has been an ongoing problem. Tacoma’s housing market is booming and rents are increasing faster than wages. Low-income and BIPOC renters in up-and-coming areas in the city are at-risk of displacement.

This Resolution affirms the City of Tacoma supports the use of data-informed tools, such as community prioritization, to prevent displacement of local residents and strongly encourages the City’s partners to use these tools to ensure more residents are able to stay in Tacoma with a focus on households from “low” and “very low” opportunity areas of the City as defined by the Equity Index as well as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) households. Further, the City Manager is directed to evaluate options to assist in preventing displacement of residents.

Direct displacement of current residents occurs when residents can no longer afford to remain in their homes due to rising rents or property taxes, or residents are forced out due to causes such as lease non-renewals and evictions to make way for new development, or physical conditions that render their homes uninhabitable.¹ Indirect displacement occurs when housing being vacated by low-income residents are no longer affordable to other low-income households.²

According to the Home in Tacoma Housing Action Plan, incomes have not kept up with housing costs. From 2016 to 2019, median rent increased by 21% while median renter income increased by only 12%.³ Similarly, the median home value of owner occupied housing increased by 44% compared to a 22% increase in median income for owner households. It is becoming increasingly difficult for renters to afford to rent or buy in Tacoma as wages fail to keep up with rising housing costs.

¹ <https://sites.utexas.edu/gentrificationproject/gentrification-and-displacement-in-austin/>

² Ibid.

³ https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/Planning/Affordable%20Housing/AHAS%20Planning%20Actions/Tacoma%20Housing%20Action%20Plan%20full%2006-8-2021.pdf

The Affordable Housing Action Strategy (AHAS) is the City’s plan to address the housing affordability crisis. The AHAS outlines that many Tacoma residents expressed concern around the potential effects of higher housing costs—namely that changing market conditions could price out longtime residents and community-based businesses from their neighborhoods or make it difficult to stay in or buy a home within Tacoma.⁴

On June 30, 2020, the City Council passed Resolution 40622 that directed the City Manager to prioritize anti-racism in the evaluation of new policies and programs, as well as the sustained and comprehensive transformation of existing services.⁵

Households in Pierce County who identify as BIPOC are disproportionately impacted by housing precarity and displacement. According to the *Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC)* report, Black/African American people represent 26.3% of the HMIS population in Pierce County, despite only making up 6.6% of the general population in Pierce County.⁶ According to the Housing Precarity Risk Model⁷ from the UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project, 24% of all renters (29,265 out of 122,460) in Pierce County live in high-precarity neighborhoods.⁸ Among all Black or African-American renters in Pierce County, 39% live in high-precarity neighborhoods and the percentage for Asian and Latinx renters is just below this.⁹ Among all White renters, only 18% live in high-precarity neighborhoods in Pierce County.¹⁰

The City’s historically Black and African-American neighborhood, Hilltop, is at particular risk of residents being displaced – and many residents have already left the 98405 zip code. A transportation study from the Federal Transit Administration titled, *Proposed Strategies to Increase Affordability & Stem Displacement on Hilltop (2017)*, found that “many Hilltop residents, particularly renters, cannot keep pace with rising housing costs.” The study found that 45% of Hilltop households are spending more than 30% of their income toward housing costs, compared with 39% citywide.¹¹ According to a representative of the Tacoma Urban League quoted by the Seattle Times, 35% of African Americans moved out of the Hilltop neighborhood between 2010 and 2015.¹²

The City has a legacy of policies and practices that have compounded the issue of displacement for Tacoma residents, including, but not limited to:

- Racially restrictive residential redlining
- Racially restrictive housing covenants
- Disinvestment in non-white neighborhoods, especially historically Black neighborhoods
- Urban revitalization starting in the 1990s through current development of high-opportunity transit in Hilltop
- Maintaining low housing supply through exclusive single-family zoning in roughly 75% of Tacoma

These policies have led to staggering statistics for Pierce County:

- #1 in state for eviction risk, with 18% of Black adults being named in an eviction¹³
- #1 in state for unemployment rate and change in unemployment (2019-20)¹⁴

⁴ <https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/cedd/housing/affordablehousingactionstrategy.pdf>

⁵ <https://cityoftacoma.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4579947&GUID=A7AD32E5-A284-457C-96E5-B5D7A68B4B27&Options=ID|Text|Attachments|Other|&Search=40622>

⁶ <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/67289/SPARC-Tacoma---Pierce-County-Report-February-2018?bidId=>

⁷ <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/us-regions/housing-precarity-risk-model#link-0>

⁸ https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UPwWbWbcQ1M2APhs8lb_6euj67iqpdCHX3NRm5SVhE4/edit#gid=1860792350

⁹ Ibid. Citation 8.

¹⁰ Ibid. Citation 8.

¹¹ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4324639-Tacoma-City-Council-Hilltop-Strategies.html>

¹² <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/as-tacomahilltop-changes-residents-are-priced-out/>

¹³ https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/ddJoNnL-2-oNX72KR7R__JwNOU-COW6Js65ISOAbIEesfm2iTnhAbg3NuIWHb04ugoREw8hjDLXrIGTa.8T2IJP5QagRcah2y?startTime=1630609862000&_x_zm_rtaid=2H5JV3wuTjqdp0khNmL6bA.1633727808775.b5f4bd09064b75a31121205edd02f259&_x_zm_rhtaid=172

¹⁴ Ibid. Citation 13.

DESIRED RESOLUTION DATE: November 9, 2021

ALIGNMENT WITH TACOMA 2025 KEY FOCUS AREAS:

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

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.

Improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health needs assessment and CHIP, for all Tacoma residents

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

If you have a question related to the Council Consideration Request, please contact Council Assistant Claire Goodwin at (253) 219-0679 or claire.goodwin@cityoftacoma.org.

SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION BY: Council Member Kristina Walker

SUPPORTING COUNCIL MEMBERS SIGNATURES (2 SIGNATURES ONLY)

(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# Mayor**

2.  **POS# 4**

Mayor's initials 