



RESOLUTION NO. 41891

1 BY REQUEST OF COUNCIL MEMBERS DIAZ, SCOTT, AND WALKER

2 A RESOLUTION relating to public spaces; affirming that site reclamation
3 should aim to activate and restore public spaces for community use to
4 the best extent possible; and directing the City Manager to review past
5 site reclamation efforts that utilized boulders to provide cost estimates
6 for removal, site restoration, and boulder storage, as well as options for
7 expanding general funding for future site reclamation without boulders.

8 WHEREAS in the past two years, the City has installed large boulders in
9 support of twenty-four site reclamation efforts; however the use of boulders for site
10 reclamation in the City has sparked community frustration, with many community
11 members noting that boulders are unattractive and give the appearance that the
12 neighborhood is unsafe or not well cared for by residents, and

13 WHEREAS community members and homelessness advocates have also
14 stressed that boulders create divides in our neighborhoods and send a message of
15 hostility to our vulnerable unhoused population, and

16 WHEREAS site reclamation may occur following encampment removal and
17 is defined in the City as “the process of making public and private spaces safer and
18 more welcoming for people who live or work in the area while discouraging criminal
19 activity and loitering,” and

20 WHEREAS the use of boulders for site reclamation is not always effective at
21 preventing the return of encampments on both public and private property, and in
22 some areas, the encampment has shifted onto the sidewalks in front of the
23 installed boulders, while in others, unhoused individuals have incorporated the
24 boulders into the encampment, and
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WHEREAS a variety of treatments beyond boulders exist to help with site reclamation efforts which vary in cost and include actions such as trimming or adding trees and vegetation, increasing lighting, and installing fencing to discourage the growth of encampments, and

WHEREAS this resolution would affirm that site reclamation should aim to activate and restore public spaces for community use to the best extent possible, and direct the City Manager to review past site reclamation efforts that utilized boulders to provide cost estimates for potential removal, site restoration, and boulder storage, and

WHEREAS additionally, estimated costs and options for alternative treatments that decrease boulder use at future site reclamation locations should be included, along with estimated costs and options for helping private property owners decrease their reliance on boulders, and

WHEREAS site reclamation efforts often take place in lower equity areas, making these neighborhoods more likely to see boulders installed as part of site reclamation efforts; however due to community concerns the use of boulders can prompt, exploring alternatives for site reclamation when possible and assessing locations for eventual site restoration would help ensure that boulders continue to be used only as a last resort and are not left permanently in locations, and



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WHEREAS some community members and homeless advocates have shared concerns with City Council Members regarding the use of boulders for site reclamation, noting that boulders do little to solve homelessness and can lead to the further displacement of unhoused community members; however, some community members support continuing the City’s site reclamation work, especially with alternative treatments, to address the risks encampments can pose to the health and safety of communities, as well as the unhoused community members living in them; Now, Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

Section 1. The City Council affirms that site reclamation should aim to activate and restore public spaces for community use to the best extent possible.

Section 2. The City Manager is hereby directed to review past site reclamation efforts that utilized boulders to provide cost estimates for potential removal, site restoration, and boulder storage, as well as options for expanding general funding for future site reclamation without boulders, including:

- a. Ensuring that a wide range of options are considered for site reclamation when possible, including site activation techniques, inclusive architecture, and crime prevention through environmental design; using trees and landscaping in site reclamation in cost-effective ways should be a priority and the installation of only boulders should continue to be a treatment of last resort; and



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b. When boulders are used for site reclamation in residential areas or locations that are highly visible to the public, evaluating their ongoing need annually with a standardized City assessment; and ensuring that decisions to remove boulders would also include adjacent property owner agreement; and

c. Ensuring that boulders protecting people from dangerous and hazardous areas, such as railroad tracks, or protecting vital public infrastructure, such as water and power supplies or bridges, are left in place for safety; and

d. If any existing boulders are ready for removal, providing an overview of the estimated costs of removal and options for site restoration as part of the 2027-2028 biennial budget; these cost estimates should also include options for storing boulders that are removed from current locations for potential future reuse.

Section 3. The City Manager should report to the City Council no later than July 2026 about whether any currently used boulders can be removed, and the options and cost estimates for site restoration.

Adopted _____

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Deputy City Attorney