



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Council Member Joe Bushnell and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster
COPY: City Clerk and City Council
SUBJECT: **Resolution – Allocating Council Contingency Funds to Support the Larchmont Community Schoolyard Project – October 28, 2025**
DATE: October 15, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution authorizing \$32,380.44 in Council Contingency Funds to support the Larchmont Community schoolyard Project.
[Council Member Joe Bushnell]

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members Joe Bushnell, Sarah Rumbaugh, and Kristina Walker

BACKGROUND:

This Department's Recommendation is Based On:

The Trust for Public Lands, Parks Tacoma, and Tacoma Public Schools launched a mission to transform Tacoma's schoolyards to vibrant, community spaces through the Community School Yard program. They are working to ensure that every person in Tacoma has a quality park within a 10-minute walk of home. By maximizing the use of existing schoolyards to serve as improved play arenas and increasingly natural spaces for children as well as adults. The first five pilot locations will serve more than 25,000 people in Tacoma's South End and East Tacoma neighborhoods. While the first four projects (Stafford Elementary, Reed Elementary, Mann Elementary, and Whitman Elementary) have been completed, a recent reversal in federal grant funding disrupted the construction of the Larchmont Elementary Community Schoolyard.

Larchmont Elementary's new community schoolyard would help bring quality green space to over 1,000 nearby residents – addressing one of the largest park access gaps of any major city in Washington. Larchmont Elementary in the Eastside neighborhood of Tacoma currently services 370 students.

While the loss of federal grant funding is a setback, the core project partners, Trust for Public Lands, Parks Tacoma and Tacoma Public Schools each stepped up with additional dollars to create a true community schoolyard park. They are short a small portion of the total \$912,380.55 projected cost and reached out for potential participation by the City of Tacoma as a great show of full community support for helping to fill the 10-minute walk gaps within the City.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

The local community in Tacoma has been actively involved in the design of each schoolyard park. Participatory design sessions with students and community members is an integral part of the program, as Parks Tacoma and The Trust for Public Lands has continued to center communities as a core principle and goal of the program. The schoolyard includes a simple playground, a well-worn natural turf field, and vacant grassy area. The grassy area represents a multitude of opportunities to bring the community's vision to life for this play space. Students and neighbors already use the schoolyard regularly for drop-in activities, most notably for cricket. Creating a green schoolyard in this space would fortify community ownership and solidify the schoolyard as a community hub.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)

When the Community Schoolyard program launched, 31% of Tacoma residents could not access parks or open spaces within a 10-minute walk of their homes, the largest park access gap of any major city in Washington. Renovating and opening all of Tacoma's schoolyards to the public would increase the percentage of Tacomans living near a park from 69% to 88%.



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Education: *Equity Index Score: Very Low Opportunity*

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

Demonstrate community support for education by increasing support for school levies and bonds; volunteering and mentoring youth.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score: Very Low Opportunity*

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.

Livability: *Equity Index Score: Very Low Opportunity*

Increase the number of Complete Compact Communities/ 20-Minute Neighborhoods throughout the city.

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

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

How does your policy, program, or service help or harm the health of the natural environment?² (e.g. reduction in carbon emissions, open space conditions, sustainability, clean air, water and soil, and noise and light pollution).

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

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

The very nature of schoolyards directly enhances educational opportunities for youth. The community driven focus of each school yard reflects the needs of communities, and shows children and adults how their needs influence outcomes. Community schoolyards have significant impact on livability for entire neighborhoods. Close-to-home parks serve as essential backyards for millions of people and open up countless possibilities for communities and cities by helping to confront some of today's most pressing urban challenges.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Do not provide funding, or provide less funding	Preserve resources for other priorities	Larchmont schoolyard project will have to be downsized
2.		
3.		

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The Trust for Public Lands, Parks Tacoma, and Tacoma Public Schools should keep the City of Tacoma apprised of work on this community school yard and the Community School Yard program.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Sponsors recommend funding the remaining 32,380.44 needed to complete the final pilot project for the Community Schoolyard Project in Tacoma.



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FISCAL IMPACT:

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. 1030 - Council Contingency Fund	660000		\$32,380.44
2.			
TOTAL			\$32,380.44

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

YES

The Council Contingency Fund provides an established amount of funding each year for unbudgeted Council sponsored initiatives.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

No

ATTACHMENTS:

- Resolution

Contingency Commitments	
	Funding Amount
2025	\$ 321,709.00
Resolution 41610	
Council Requested - Golden Gloves Sponsorship	\$ 10,000.00
Council Contingency fund expenditure of \$10,000 to support the 76 th Annual Golden Gloves Boxing Tournament in Tacoma.	
Substitute Ordinance 29002	
Grand Cinema Capital Campaign	\$ 50,000.00
Dedicate \$50,000 of the 2025-2026 Budget for Council Contingency to the Grand Cinema Capital Campaign for improvements to the Merlino Building.	
Substitute Ordinance 29002	
Rebuilding Hope Capital Campaign	\$ 25,000.00
Dedicate \$25,000 of the 2025-2026 Budget for Council Contingency for the Rebuilding Hope Capital Campaign.	
Resolution 41681	
Tacoma Porchfest	\$ 10,000.00
Council Contingency fund expenditure of \$10,000 to sponsor Tacoma Porchfest.	
Resolution 41968	
South Tacoma Green Blocks Program	\$ 15,000.00
Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$15,000 to Supplement the \$30,000 South Tacoma Neighborhood Planning Booster funding to conduct a full green blocks-scale program in the South Tacoma Neighborhood.	
Resolution 41724	
Historical Society 2025 Destiny Dinner Sponsorship	\$ 10,000.00
Council Contingency Fund expenditure in the amount of \$10,000 to support the Tacoma Historical Society's 2025 Destiny Dinner.	
Resolution 41723	
BIPOC Health & Wellness Fair	\$ 5,000.00
A Council Contingency Fund expenditure in the amount of \$5,000 to support the 2025 BIPOC Health & Wellness Fair.	
Resolution 41140	
Grit of Destiny Sponsorship	\$ 15,000.00
A Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$15,000 for a "Grit of Destiny: City of Tacoma" Documentary	
Resolution 411735	
	\$ 50,000.00
A Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$50,000 for staffing and facilitation of the Tacoma Labor Standards Task Force.	
Resolution 41757	
	\$ 20,000.00
A Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$20,000 to Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest for their phone call fund.	
Resolution 41773	
	\$ 2,500.00
A Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$2,500 to sponsor 2nd Cycle's Bike Stories.	
Resolution 41774	
	\$ 7,500.00
A Council Contingency Fund expenditure of \$7,500 to sponsor Trick or Streets community event.	
To Council October 21, 2025	
	\$ 32,380.44
A Council Contingency fund expenditure of \$32,380.44 in support of the Larchmont Community Schoolyard project.	
Starting Balance	
	\$ 321,709.00
Total Amount Allotted	
	\$ 252,380.44
Current Balance	
	\$ 69,328.56