City of Tacoma **City Council Action Memorandum**

TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Council Member Kristina Walker and Christina Caan, Policy Analyst, City Manager's Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance to amend Title 1 of the Municipal Code to include a Climate and Sustainability Commission
DATE: December 4, 2024

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

An ordinance to amend Title 1 of the Municipal Code to include a Climate and Sustainability Commission.

COUNCIL SPONSORS

Council Member Kristina Walker, Council Member Sandesh Sadalge, Council Member Olgy Diaz, and Deputy Mayor John Hines

Ordinance request: We ask for your support for an ordinance to amend Title 1 of the Municipal Code to include a Climate and Sustainability Commission. The intent of this ordinance is to enshrine the existing Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC), which was created by resolution only, in the Municipal Code with some updates.[1] This ordiance is a result of the City's 2024 Charter review process, discussions with the STC, and resolution 41497, which directed the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee to evaluate potential changes to the STC.[2]

- The IPS Committee discussed this ordinance request on August 28, 2024, and expressed unanimous support for advancing an ordinance to the full City Council for consideration. The IPS Committee also expressed support for addressing climate and environmental sustainability issues. The Council discussed the ordinance on the November 5, 2024.

- This ordinance aligns with the City Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and understanding that climate change is an existential threat to human society.[3] The City Council has also expressed robust support for actions that help address climate issues, including adopting a resolution in 2021 to strengthen the City's commitment to decarbonization.[4]

Background: The City Council created a fifteen member Charter Review Commission (CRC) in 2023 to review the existing Charter of the City of Tacoma and make recommendations for amendments that would improve the City's work. The CRC launched their meetings in January 2024 and provided opportunities for public comment during their discussions. In May, the CRC published their final report and presented their recommendations to the City Council.[5]

- The CRC's recommended Charter amendments included one aimed at bolstering the City's commitments to sustainability and climate goals by adding a Climate Accountability and Sustainability Commission to the Charter. The City Council voted in July not to move this amendment forward to the November ballot and

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[1] Resolution37631-OEPS.pdf (cityoftacoma.org)
[2] City of Tacoma - File #: RES41497 (legistar.com)
[3] City of Tacoma - File #: RES40509 (legistar.com)
[4] https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/enviro/Sustain/Resolution-No-40776_Decarbonization.pdf
[5] Charter Review Committee Report (cityoftacoma.org)

instead redirected it to IPS for further study and review via resolution 41497.[6] The City Council expressed agreement in resolution 41497 with the CRC's view that "the city needs to effectively track and hold accountable its commitments to sustainability and climate goals."[7]

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive public engagement took place regarding the proposed Charter amendments. The CRC met between January and May, and they held two extended public comment meetings with opportunities to provide input in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Khmer. On May 6, the CRC presented its final report to the City Council. The City Council reviewed the proposal from the CRC and held a public hearing on July 2, where many community members expressed support for a Climate and Sustainability Commission. Council Member Kristina Walker and City staff have engaged with the STC and received their feedback on the proposal. The STC has expressed support for moving the Commission into the Municipal Code, and the overwhelming majority of its members requested the name "Climate and Sustainability Commission" due to its broad terms and straightforward acronym.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Equity and Accessibility: Climate and sustainability concerns are felt across Tacoma, as our entire region faces unprecedented heat, extreme downpours, wildfire smoke, and other impacts from climate change. However, climate issues are having disparate impacts on the health and well-being of Tacoma's historically underserved communities. The Climate and Sustainability Commission would work in alignment with the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability to help bring community accountability, transparency, and vigilance to the long-term implementation of Tacoma's Climate Action Plan and sustainability initiatives.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score*: Moderate 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*: Moderate Opportunity
How does your policy, program, or service help or harm the health of the natural environment?[ı] (e.g. reduction in carbon emissions, open space conditions, sustainability, clean air, water and soil, and noise and light pollution).

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Make no changes to the Sustainable Tacoma Commission	No action required.	The Commission will not be part of the Tacoma Municipal Code.
Make changes to the Sustainable Tacoma Commission by resolution only	Any changes can be created by resolution.	Changes will not be included in the Tacoma Municipal Code.

[6] City of Tacoma - File #: RES41497 (legistar.com)
[7] City of Tacoma - File #: RES41497 (legistar.com)

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP
The Commission will continue to report to the IPS Committee and the full City Council as appropriate.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION
Sponsors recommend advancing this ordinance.

FISCAL IMPACT
There is no fiscal impact from advancing this ordinance beyond staff time.

What Funding is being used to support the expense?
N/A

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

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:
None