



# Council Action Memo Findings Report

*A Review of the Council Action Memorandum (CAM) & Council Consideration Request (CCR) Process*

Operational Strategy and Administrative Committee (OSAC)

May 8, 2026

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## What is a CAM?

A Council Action Memorandum (CAM) is a document used for introducing a topic (often a proposal or recommendation) to Council for them to act on.

There are several types of memos that are developed for Council depending on who is bringing forward the proposal and what the proposal is for.

The types of action memos are as follows:

### Council Action Memorandum (CAM)

Generated by staff for a topic being brought to full Council

### Council Committee Memo

Generated by staff for a topic being brought to a Council Committee

### Council Contingency Request (CCR)

Generated by Council for a financial request being brought to Council

### Council Consideration Request (CCR)


Generated by Council for a policy proposal being brought to Council



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**Why are we exploring updating the CAM(s) now?**

- The City of Tacoma's Council Action Memo (CAM) and Council Consideration Request (CCR) forms were last updated in 2019.
- Since the last update, the City has adopted a new 10-year strategic plan, Tacoma 2035.
- Opportunity to identify whether additional changes or updates would increase the effectiveness of the process
- Opportunity to identify how to maximize the value of the CAM and the process to decision-makers.




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**Our Process:**

The following is a summary of the process taken to provide the CAM Report of Findings to OSAC:

- 1) Review initiated by OSAC at end of Q1 2026
- 2) Conducted interviews with eight (8) Councilmembers
- 3) Workshops with Council Policy Analysts, City Department staff, and City Directors
- 4) Feedback from OSAC on May 8, 2026, with follow up to full Council recommended in late Q2 of 2026



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**Finding:**

Different parties view the CAM documents as having different purposes, which impacts what content they would like in them.

These purposes notably include:

- Policy Development
- Policy Analysis
- Accountability/  
Transparency
- Records/ Archiving

**Recommendation 1:**

Clarify the purpose of the Council Action Memorandum, the Council Consideration and Contingency Requests, and the Council Committee Memo to Council and staff, using this refresh as an opportunity to build understanding and buy-in from all parties.



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**Finding:**

There are many use types of CAMs, with not all sections applicable to each.

The diversity of things coming to Council, including purchase resolutions, board appointments, etc., requires some way of differentiating what needs to be filled out.

**Recommendation 2:**

Investigate whether a pre-populated check box can automatically filter out the questions that are not applicable to that proposal type, and/or determine how to reduce the amount of time and work needed from staff for issues that are not relevant to the decision-making at hand. Potential “types” could include:

- Grant Approval
- Purchase
- Board Appointment
- Council Consideration Request (Policy)
- Council Contingency Request (\$)
- Setting a Hearing
- Multi-Family Tax Exemption
- Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Proclamations/ Recognitions/ Ceremonials
- and potentially others

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**Finding:**

It is not always clear what problem the CAM/CCR is seeking to solve.

Some Council Members desire a clearly articulated problem that the recommendation is seeking to solve.

Some Council Members also desire to know not just what the recommendation is, but why it's important.

**Recommendation 3:**

Include a question or portion of a question to determine what problem statement the recommendation is seeking to solve.



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**Finding:**

It is unclear, especially to newer Council Members, how the CAM/CCR is building off, or related to, past Council discussions and actions.

**Recommendation 4:**

Include an opportunity for the author to expand on the Background section by clearly including (a) past Council action or touch point(s), including past Council/ Committee meeting(s).



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**Finding:**

Currently, the “Background” and “Summary” sections are approached and filled out inconsistently.

There is inconsistency in where to put certain key details such as important context for the decision.

**Recommendation 5:**

Edit the titles and descriptions of the sections to more clearly differentiate between them for the following functions:

- Purpose and problem statement
- Sponsor recommendation
- Related governance/ Council action
- Background context



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**Finding:**

The engagement section does not offer sufficient information about who was engaged, how the engagement was conducted, and what was learned from that engagement, especially if coming from a CBC.

Current format does not:

- Indicate how the engagement was used, in terms of what changed or was helped shaped by that engagement.
- Provide a summary of inputs/ perspectives.

This section also may not be needed in situations such as issues coming before Council where it is mandated by State law.

**Recommendation 6:**

Include clear prompts in the community engagement section that encourage the author to share what was learned from the engagement and how that engagement ultimately informed the recommendation.



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**Finding:**

The equity analysis section often doesn't accomplish the intent and could be improved by broadening the analysis.

- Current equity analysis is based on the Equity Index, which is limiting to only geographic equity analysis.
- Any citywide action is marked as moderate equity impact due to the quintile formula, even if there is a specific underserved population the recommendation is seeking to support.

**Recommendation 7:**

Change the question that currently asks for an Equity Index analysis to a broader question that allows the author to identify how the recommendation is broadly reflecting the City's values and advancing access, increasing opportunity, and centering belonging for all Tacoma community members.



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**Finding:**

The fiscal analysis section contains more detailed information than is often needed, and the fiscal impacts noted are not always accurate.

**Recommendation 8:**

Simplify the fiscal analysis section to just the relevant information and find a way to incorporate the fiscal tradeoffs that are not currently captured in the process.



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**Finding:**

Alternatives presented often are binary (do this or don't do this), and do not present the alternatives considered during the development of the recommendation being brought to Council or provide a range of other options for Council to consider.

**Recommendation 9:**

Edit the Alternatives section to have the author describe:

1. What other alternatives can be considered by Council to address the problem or issue at hand, and
2. What alternatives were considered during the development of the CAM/CCR, and why those alternatives were not ultimately recommended.



**Finding:**

Even though it is the headline part of the CAM/CCR, the sponsor recommendation is currently at the end of the document.

**Recommendation 10:**

Move the staff recommendation section to the beginning of the document (so Council and the community see the recommendation immediately).



**Finding:**

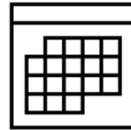
There is a desire for a clearer timeline, not just of when the item will be coming back to Council, but also the timeline for completion of the proposed action.

The Evaluation and follow-up section does not sufficiently ask when the proposed action will be completed, in addition to current ask of evaluation/ next steps.

Current format of document does not include a description of ongoing or future support needed from Council.

**Recommendation 11:**

Include a proposed timeline or expectation of completion note to the evaluation and follow-up section. Include a clear follow-up that asks what the measurable follow-up will be, and how Council will know that the effort has been successful.



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**Finding:**

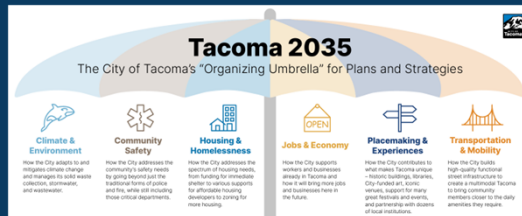
There is a desire to better understand what the potential impacts of the proposal will be, both positive and negative, in relation to Council goals/priorities, using measurables where possible.

Current CAMs and CCRs typically do not articulate details of (potential) negative impacts.

More information, especially on how it advances Tacoma 2035, would be helpful.

**Recommendation 12:**

Update the documents to reflect Tacoma 2035 goals, and update impacts section to ensure how the recommendation advances the relevant goal is adequately described.



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## Next Steps

1. OSAC Discussion May 8, 2026
2. Incorporate OSAC feedback
3. Follow-up interviews in May and June 2026
4. Development of draft revised CAM template
5. Presentation of draft CAM template to Council in late Q2 2026



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