City of Tacoma **City Council Action Memorandum**

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Council Member Olgy Diaz and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster
COPY: City Clerk and City Council
SUBJECT: **Ordinance – Relating to the unauthorized use of public property for civil immigration enforcement – May 5, 2026**
DATE: April 29, 2026

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

An ordinance amending Chapter 8.19 (Use of Public Property) of the Municipal Code, relating to unauthorized use of public property for civil immigration enforcement, to limit use of municipal property for civil immigration enforcement purposes.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Deputy Mayor Joe Bushnell and Council Members Olgy Diaz, Sarah Rumbaugh, and Sandesh Sadalge.

BACKGROUND:

In furtherance of the City's strategic priorities the City has invested substantial resources to develop, maintain and provide public access to municipal property for the use and enjoyment of the public, to provide and administer public programs and City services, to support and foster economic development and recreation, and to perform the day-to-day operations and business of the City. Municipal property is a critical access point relied upon by all residents and visitors, and preserving their safety, accessibility, and operational continuity is a matter of practical necessity and fiscal responsibility. To protect public safety, the City strives to foster trust and cooperation between the City, including its police department, and its immigrant communities by encouraging immigrants to report crime and speak to the police without fear of being arrested or detained by, or reported to, federal immigration authorities. If the City were to assist with the enforcement of federal immigration laws, including permitting the use of municipal property to assist in that enforcement, it would unquestionably discourage that critical cooperation and involvement and would undermine public safety and the functionality of municipal property and services.

The City has the power and authority as proprietary owner to preserve property under its control for the use and purpose to which it is lawfully dedicated, and to determine what activities upon its property that are not lawfully mandated under state or federal law are permissible and impermissible, and to prohibit those activities that are impermissible. The City Council finds that property owned or controlled by the City should not be used without the permission or consent of the City of Tacoma by agents of the federal government, including but not limited to agents of ICE and CBP, for civil immigration enforcement purposes, and that a policy prohibiting such use is a proper exercise of the City of Tacoma's power as proprietary owner of such municipal property and a proper exercise of its police power for the public safety, health, and general welfare and for the continuance, delivery and maintenance of business and governance operations of the City.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

The City has heard from residents of their fear of using municipal property and services because they worry that they may be exposed to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) immigration enforcement action. The City has also heard from residents and local business owners that the fear of ICE and CBP civil immigration enforcement actions causes disruption of economic activity, undermines community cohesion, and erodes trust in law enforcement, and that ICE civil immigration enforcement.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: ***(Mandatory)***

Tacoma's 2035 calls out specific goals around community safety, jobs and the economy, transportation and mobility, and placemaking and experiences.

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score*: Moderate Opportunity
Increase the number of Tacoma households that have livable wage jobs within proximity to the city.
Increase positive public perception related to the Tacoma economy.

Livability: *Equity Index Score*: Moderate Opportunity
Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.
Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).
Substantial evidence from major cities across the country demonstrates that civil immigration enforcement activities disrupt and interfere with public access to and use of municipal property and services for the purposes for which they are intended, and creates public health and safety risks, and drains local public resources. In furtherance of the City's strategic priorities the City has invested substantial resources to develop, maintain and provide public access to municipal property for the use and enjoyment of the public, to provide and administer public programs and City services, to support and foster economic development and recreation, and to perform the day-to-day operations and business of the City. Municipal property is a critical access point relied upon by all residents and visitors, and preserving their safety, accessibility, and operational continuity is a matter of practical necessity and fiscal responsibility.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Take no action	Preserve City resources for other priorities	Would not be responding to urgent community need

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The City Manager should keep the City Council apprised of implementation of this policy, including installation of signs on municipal property. The immigration resources web page should be updated to include information about this policy and how private property owners, tenants and leaseholders can be a Stand Together Tacoma partner.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Sponsors recommend passing this Ordinance and limiting the use of municipal property for civil immigration purposes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to adopting the code/language change. This policy will require staff time to create signage templates and materials. Impacts will be incorporated into ongoing workload and managed within the Adopted

2025-2026 Biennial Budget amounts. Further resourcing needs should be reviewed as part of the 2027-2028 biennium budget development process.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. N/A			
2.			
TOTAL			

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?
YES

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:
N/A