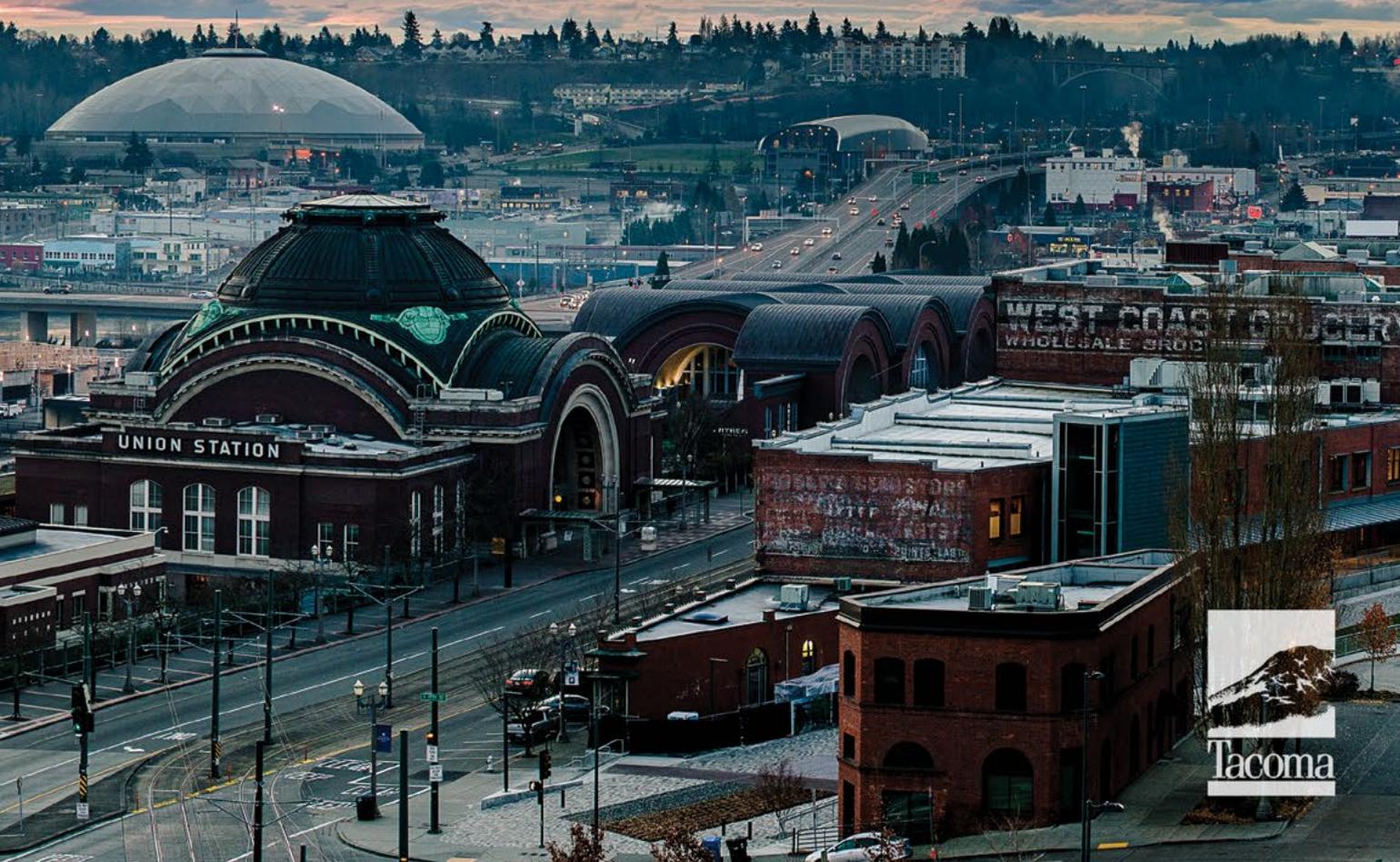


# tacoma2025

shared vision | shared future







City of Tacoma  
Marilyn Strickland, Mayor

**A Message from Mayor Marilyn Strickland**

This strategic plan was inspired by the richly diverse range of community perspectives shared with us in meetings, focus groups, online forums and workshops. It includes goals that are ambitious, and will guide policy-making priorities over the next decade.

Welcoming. Beautiful. Emerging. Home. These are just a few of the words used to describe our city by those who shared their thoughts and ideas about Tacoma's future.

As our progressive international waterfront city continues to evolve and improve, now is the time for us to come together and make Tacoma the city of choice. With a distinct focus on economic opportunity, education and quality of life, we can bring our community's vision to life.

We will need an unprecedented level of civic engagement, full participation and commitment from public entities, non-profit and business partners to help us make this plan a success.

Please join us.

Sincerely,  
Marilyn Strickland  
Mayor

747 Market Street, Room 1200 ■ Tacoma, Washington 98402-3766 ■ (253) 591-5130 ■ FAX (253) 591-5123

## Tacoma City Council



**Mayor  
Marilyn Strickland**



**Deputy Mayor  
David Boe**



**Ryan Mello  
At-Large**



**Victoria Woodards  
At-Large**



**Anders Ibsen  
District 1**



**Robert Thoms  
District 2**



**Lauren Walker  
District 3**



**Marty Campbell  
District 4**



**Joe Lonergan  
District 5**

## Council Priorities

1. Strengthen and maintain a Strong Fiscal Management position.
2. Strengthen and support Human Services, Public Education, and Diverse Higher Learning opportunities in Tacoma.
3. Foster Neighborhood, Community, and Economic Development Vitality and Sustainability.
4. Plan for and improve Public Infrastructure that meets the Transportation needs of all Tacoma residents and visitors.
5. Encourage and promote an Open, Effective, Results-oriented Organization.



City of Tacoma  
City Manager

I am pleased to present the City of Tacoma's Citywide Strategic Plan and Vision, also known as Tacoma 2025. The Plan is a result of the community's desire to create a shared vision for a shared future and represents the input of over 2,000 engaged residents, community and business partners, the Mayor, Council Members and City staff.

As recommended by the Fiscal Sustainability Task Force in December 2013, Council initiated a process for a long-term visioning effort that would create an open, inclusive and transparent process for all Tacoma residents and stakeholders. After nine months of community engagement through fairs, festivals, interviews, committee meetings, online forums and a community event held on July 30, 2014, Tacoma 2025 was developed to guide the City in decision-making and resource allocation, as well as performance tracking and reporting. The community identified seven focus areas: Health & Safety, Human & Social Needs, Economic Vibrancy & Employment, Education & Learning, Arts & Cultural Vitality, Natural & Built Environment, and Government Performance. All focus areas are guided by four principles important to the community: Opportunity, Equity, Partnerships, and Accountability.

Over the next several months, staff will develop a five-year action plan as part of the City's commitment to ensuring this plan and its various components are implemented in partnership with residents and other stakeholders in a transparent manner. Additionally, as part of the 2015-2016 Biennial Budget, I have dedicated specialized staff support through a full-time position to manage the implementation and coordination of Tacoma 2025. I look forward to the partnerships that will be formed and/or further strengthened as a result of our shared vision for Tacoma.

I want to take the time to thank everyone for his or her participation in this effort. The Steering Committee, the City staff, the consultant team, and most importantly the community provided support, wisdom, and guidance throughout the process.

T.C. Broadnax,  
City Manager

747 Market Street, Room 1200 ■ Tacoma, Washington 98402-3766 ■ (253) 591-5130 ■ FAX (253) 591-5123



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# Executive Summary



## 1: Health and Safety

*A safe city with healthy residents*

- 1A:** Improve neighborhood safety
- 1B:** Increase active living
- 1C:** Improve overall health

## 2: Human and Social Needs

*All Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs*

- 2A:** Increase housing security
- 2B:** Improve services to youth and vulnerable populations
- 2C:** Reduce poverty

## 3: Economic Vibrancy and Employment

*A vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents*

- 3A:** Increase the number and quality of jobs throughout Tacoma
- 3B:** Diversify Tacoma's living wage business base
- 3C:** Improve neighborhood business districts
- 3D:** Strengthen downtown Tacoma as a business core and residential option

## 4: Education and Learning

*Thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning*

- 4A:** Close the education achievement gaps
- 4B:** Prepare people to succeed in Tacoma's workforce

## 5: Arts and Cultural Vitality

*A vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community*

- 5A:** Increase participation in arts and culture
- 5B:** Embrace Tacoma's diversity of people, places, and cultures
- 5C:** Leverage and strengthen Tacoma's arts and cultural assets

## 6: Natural and Built Environment

*Outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment*

- 6A:** Increase transportation options
- 6B:** Sustain and improve Tacoma's natural environment
- 6C:** Grow and enhance the vitality of Tacoma's neighborhoods
- 6D:** Improve and maintain Tacoma's streets

## 7: Government Performance

*Efficient and effective government, guided by engaged residents*

- 7A:** Ensure accountable, efficient, and transparent city services
- 7B:** Engage residents, stakeholders, and partners in the future of Tacoma
- 7C:** Strengthen the City's fiscal sustainability

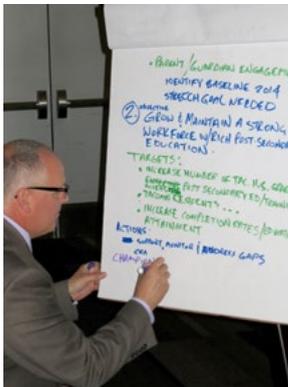
## Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee

The Tacoma 2025 Citywide Vision and Strategic Planning process was guided by a Steering Committee that was representative of Tacoma's many partner organizations and diverse voices. These volunteers participated both in Steering Committee meetings and in all of the community events during the Tacoma 2025 process. Together, they worked to ensure that this plan's values, opportunities, priorities, and accountability measures reflect the dreams and aspirations of Tacoma's remarkable community.

Lois Bernstein, MultiCare  
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Andrew Buelow, Pierce County Arts and Culture Executives, Tacoma Symphony  
Martha Cerna, Puget Sound Latino Chamber  
Anthony Chen, MD, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department  
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Priscilla Lisicich, Safe Streets  
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Evette Mason, Port of Tacoma  
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Mike Wark, University of Washington-Tacoma  
Wayne Williams, Metro Parks Tacoma

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*Names shown as interpreted on the July 30, 2014 sign-up sheet*

## Acknowledgements

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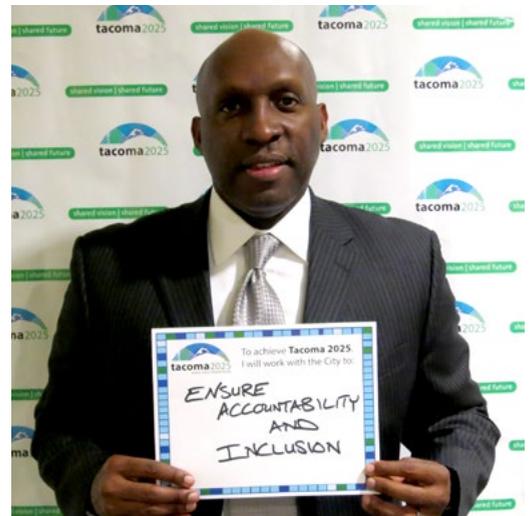
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Lisa Wojtanowicz  
Carol Wolfe  
Lisa Woods  
Lihuang Wung



**"I appreciated the comprehensive approach and inclusive process, as well as the leadership of the City Manager, Mayor and City Council. More importantly, I am convinced that one of the defining differences between this and any previous city plan is their approach to collaborating with community partners."**

*Wayne Williams, Metro Parks Tacoma  
Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee*



**"I am impressed with Tacoma 2025 as the blueprint to bring continuity to all city efforts. The breadth of representation of Tacoma's diversity brought about a unified and well reasoned vision of the City's future."**

*Marty Mattes, Bates Technical College  
Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee*



# Introduction

Tacoma is one of the nation's healthiest, safest, and most playful cities. We have daily access to stunning natural surroundings and a great quality of life. We are Washington's most diverse big city, with arts, culture, parks, and recreational opportunities that are envied by much larger cities. We recognize just how lucky we are, but we know we can make it better.

## Shared vision | Shared future

More than 2,000 Tacoma residents participated in "Tacoma 2025" through a dozen fairs and festivals (such as Ethnic Fest, farmers markets, at the Zoo), an online forum, a community survey, and a series of citywide visioning events. More than 300 residents of all ages gathered at the Convention Center on July 30, 2014 to share their vision for a shared future. More than 100 residents turned out to review the first draft of Tacoma 2025 during fall events at the Asia Pacific Cultural Center, University of Puget Sound, and Bates Technical College.

## Potential

The important theme is shared vision and shared future. Tacomans turned out for this vision in a big way, and agreed that Tacoma is bursting with potential. When asked to describe Tacoma in a single word, Tacomans resoundingly said, "potential." This word contains the hope of a better future and the excitement to achieve it. Participants came with numerous ideas for how the City and the community can help Tacoma reach its potential.

## Core Values

The Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee identified four Core Values to shape the process and Tacoma's vision:

**Opportunity, Equity, Partnerships, and Accountability.** Each of the community events used these core values to shape discussion of Tacoma's future and to ensure that the resulting plan is visionary, realistic, and focused on specific and measurable outcomes.

## Focus Areas

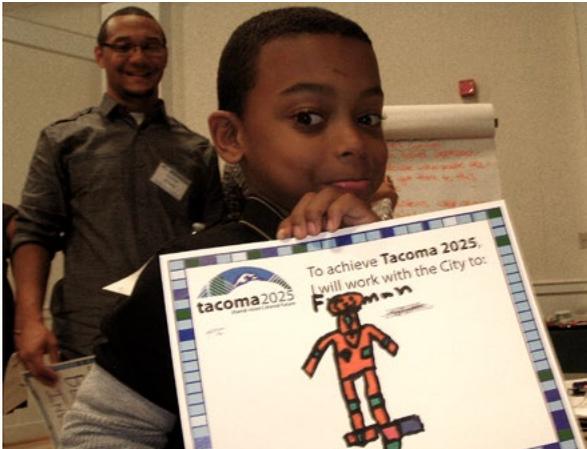
Diversity is Tacoma's greatest asset and the foundation of its outstanding arts, culture, and community programs. Along with a spectacular natural setting, the diversity of Tacoma's workforce and quality of its neighborhoods give Tacoma an enviable foundation for community and economic development. At the same time, the community has much to accomplish in terms of public health and safety, human and social needs, and education and learning.

To address these challenges and opportunities, Tacoma 2025 is organized into 7 Focus Areas:

- Health and Safety
- Human and Social Needs
- Economic Vibrancy and Employment
- Education and Learning
- Arts and Cultural Vitality
- Natural and Built Environment
- Government Performance

**"The process encouraged diverse ideas and supported participants to develop strategies and tactics in a collaborative way."**

*Priscilla Lisicich, Safe Streets Campaign  
Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee*



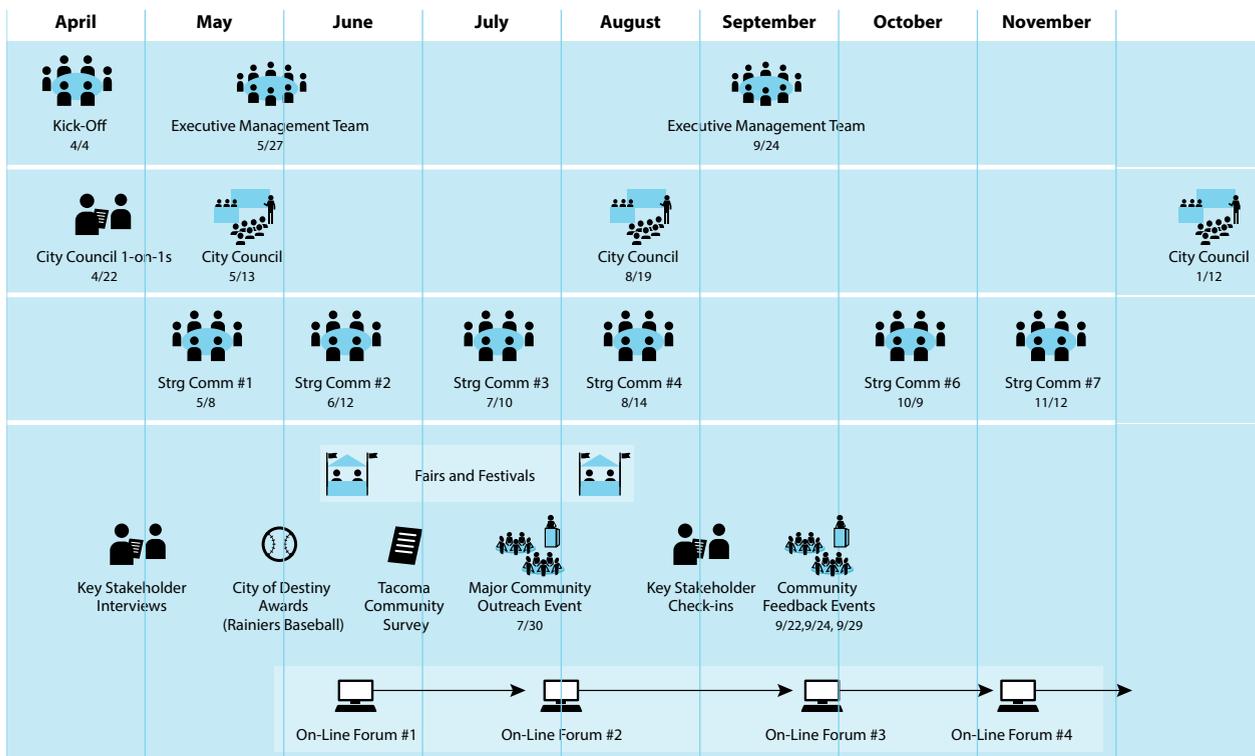
# Process

Public involvement was an important part of developing Tacoma 2025. The community engagement program was widespread, and included a variety of ways to gather input from organized stakeholder groups, the general public, and from communities that are sometimes under-represented in community planning.

Outreach aimed to make participation convenient for community members to provide input in a variety of ways. In total, more than 2,000 Tacoma residents provided input into Tacoma 2025 between May and October 2014 through the following activities:

- 7 Steering Committee meetings
- An interactive booth at 14 fairs, festivals, and special events throughout Tacoma, including:
  - City of Destiny Event, May 28
  - Point Defiance Zoo, June 17
  - Go Skate Tacoma, June 21
  - South Tacoma Farmer’s Market, June 22
  - Disaster Preparedness Workshop, June 25
  - Freedom Fair, July 4
  - Out in the Park, July 12
  - Art on the Ave, July 13
  - Point Defiance Zoo, July 15
  - Proctor Farmers Market, July 19
  - Tacoma Jazz and Blues Festival, July 26
  - Ethnic Fest, July 27
  - Brew Five Three, August 9
  - Military Parade, August 16
  - Ethnic Fest
- An online community forum, with 4 phases
- The Tacoma Community Survey, which included questions specific to Tacoma 2025
- More than 100 one-one-one interviews with individuals and stakeholder groups
- A Community Visioning Workshop on July 30, 2014
- 3 Tacoma 2025 Vision Preview Workshops on September 22, 24, and 29

The illustration below shows the varied community outreach activities completed during the Tacoma 2025 process.





# Core Values:

## Supporting Quality of Life in Tacoma

### **Opportunity**

Tacoma abounds with opportunity and positions its residents to excel. Tacoma residents enjoy a spectacular natural setting and a world-class seaport. Tacoma is one of the most diverse major cities in the Pacific Northwest, and the City sustains a superior arts and cultural scene. Tacoma's higher educational opportunities are excellent. Tacoma has remarkable access to the markets of the western United States and the Pacific Rim, yet benefits from a cost of living that is more affordable than nearby cities. Tacoma pursues its destiny from a foundation that is second to none.

### **Equity**

Tacoma's diversity is its greatest asset. In an increasingly global marketplace, Tacoma embraces its multi-cultural and multi-ethnic character. Communities of color and immigrant communities are fundamental to Tacoma's entrepreneurial spirit, workforce, and long-term success. In Tacoma, equity and empowerment are top priorities, meaning that all Tacoma residents must have equitable opportunities to reach their full potential and share in the benefits of community progress.

### **Partnerships**

The City of Tacoma cannot achieve this vision alone. Effective partnerships with community organizations, neighborhoods, business groups, and other government agencies are essential. This plan is the shared product of community collaboration. In pursuing the visions outlined here, the City will work closely with its partners to efficiently use existing resources. Bringing Tacoma 2025 to reality will be a community effort.

### **Accountability**

Tacoma has emerged from difficult times through fiscal discipline and hard decisions. Tacoma residents expect efficient and effective performance from their city government and the City's officials and staff take this responsibility seriously. Pursuit of Tacoma 2025 will be transparent and accountable.



# 1: Health and safety

## A safe city with healthy residents.

### Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma is—and is known as—one of the safest cities in Washington State. Strong partnerships between law enforcement, neighborhood groups, and public officials have reduced crime rates and recidivism, making Tacoma residents feel safe and secure. Community cohesion is improved and sustained through proactive prevention programs and youth outreach. As a result, Tacoma has increased home readiness, community preparedness, and decreased preventable fires.

Tacoma also boasts high rates of personal, communal, and environmental health. Residents enjoy equal access to Tacoma's strong health care system and access to healthy, local, and affordable food options. Tacoma's great outdoor spaces, access to nature, and recreational opportunities support residents in managing their own health. Healthy air quality means few worries about exercise, whether running along the Sound, hiking in Point Defiance, or at high school track practice. All of this has improved overall health and reduced health disparities. In 2025, residents call Tacoma a place of healthy behavior, healthy environments, and healthy homes.

### Community Priorities

- 1A **Improve neighborhood safety.** Tacoma residents want to feel safe. This means that the rate of crime falls and people feel secure in their neighborhoods.
- 1B **Increase active living.** Increasing active lifestyles is Tacoma's greatest opportunity to improve the health of its residents.
- 1C **Improve overall health.** Tacoma residents value an integrated system of wellness programs and health care as a means of supporting community health and wellbeing.

### Accountability Measures

- Increase residents' **feeling of safety**
- Increase the percent of residents reporting **leisure time physical activity**
- Increase the percent of students who meet recommended **physical activity levels**
- Improve **self-reported health status** among residents
- Decrease **obesity rates** among adults and youth
- Decrease the prevalence of current **adult smokers**

### Equity

In 2025, Tacoma is a safe city with healthy residents that has eliminated the underlying disparities in safety and health that impact underrepresented communities.

### Partnerships

#### Key Partners

Tacoma–Pierce County Health Dept.  
Health Systems  
Pierce County  
Metro Parks  
Tacoma School District

#### Focus Area Connections

The objectives for Health and Safety have strong linkages with related objectives for **Natural and Built Environment** and **Human and Social Needs**.

#### City Champions

Tacoma Police Department  
Tacoma Fire Department  
Office of Environmental Policy & Sustainability

## Context

A healthy and safe city is one in which individuals feel supported in managing their health and are safe from danger. Improving health and safety can foster community cohesion, increase happiness, and attract new residents and businesses. Active living often depends on the built environment: bike lanes, trails, and access to nature. Environmental preservation is a key priority for Tacoma. Unsafe environments can dampen economic development and discourage business retention, attraction, and expansion. Improving health and safety is critical to a city's future.

### Tacoma Today

#### *The community wants to live in a safer city*

- Although overall rates of crime have gone down over the past ten years, there has been a recent increase in violent crime. Many community members voiced concern about youth participation in gangs and increased gang violence.
- Safety was the number one concern among residents of Tacoma in the National Citizen Survey. Indeed, Tacoma has one of the highest violent crime rates among Washington cities and 55% agreed that the City should spend more on crime prevention.

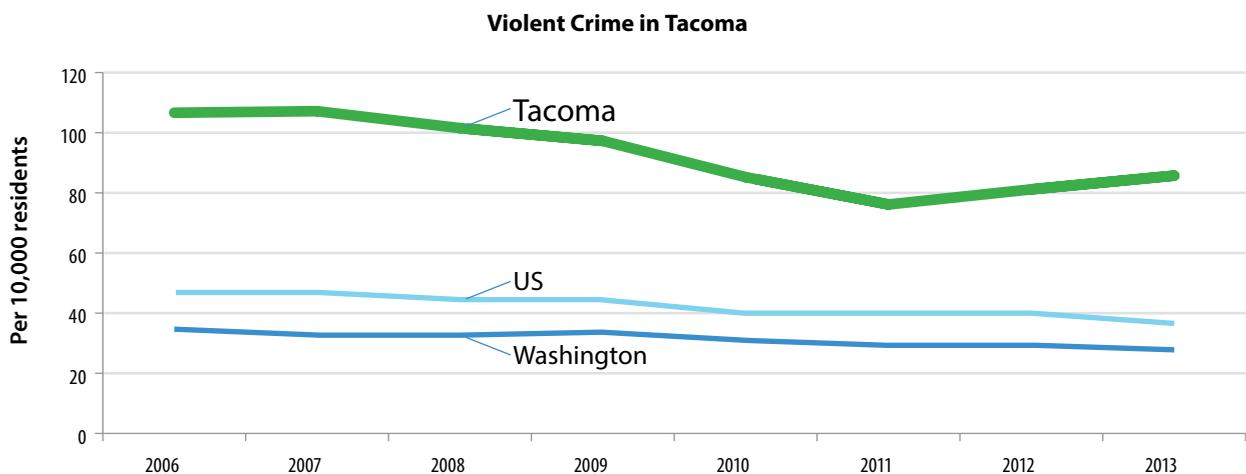
- Tacoma residents have a distinct overall *perception* that their city is unsafe. Although over 80% of residents feel safe in their neighborhoods, only 40% feel that Tacoma is a safe city. Feedback at community outreach events suggested that strained relationships between the community and the police department have increasingly compounded this issue.

#### *Residents value active living and healthy lifestyles*

- The majority of residents who responded to the National Citizen Survey gave a positive rating to health and wellness, preventative health services, health care, food, recreational opportunities, and fitness opportunities.
- Residents voiced the importance of access to healthy food in their community, as well as the importance of recreational opportunities.

#### *Residents also value equitable access to health resources*

- Residents also expressed particular concern for disparities related to race/ethnicity, as well as the need for comprehensive services for the mentally ill.
- High rates of tobacco use and obesity contribute to heart disease—the leading cause of death in Pierce County. In fact, residents of Pierce County have an overall higher death rate than Washington State residents, as a result of preventable disease. These rates are higher among at-risk populations.



Sources: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, 2006–2013; FBI Uniform Crime Reports.  
"Violent Crime" includes murder, rape, assault, and robbery.

*Crime rates have dropped over the past decade.*

## Implementation

### Additional Partners

Community organizations  
(i.e., YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, etc.)  
Community Clinic Network  
Faith communities  
Community mobilization & youth partners  
Tacoma business improvement area

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Provide police and fire/EMS services responsible for public safety activities. In addition to the primary accountability measure of increasing residents' feelings of safety, the City will also track the rates of violent and property crimes, as well as fire/EMS rates.
- Collaborate with the Public Health Department and Metro Parks planning and activities.
- Help fund and collaborate with a myriad of community organizations working in health and safety.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

Neighborhood Councils

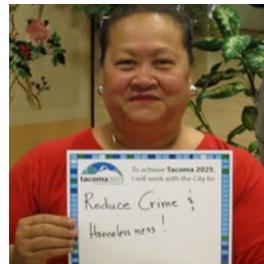
Citizen Review Panel

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

### "Reduce crime and homelessness!"

Lua Pritchard



### "Build greater partnerships throughout our city!"

Chief Don Ramsdell

### "Contact my neighborhood watch captain and get neighbors on my block involved."

Bea Christophersen



### "Know my neighbors and watch out for them. Give to local social service organizations."

Gwen Voepel

### "Bring neighborhoods and communities together to clean up, prevent crime, make it safer for our future generations, god needs to be back in all we do!"

Gerod Byrel



# 2: Human and Social Needs

All Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.

## Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma has a strong and resilient social safety net. Tacoma also benefits from an integrated service delivery system that helps address multiple needs and gets people back on their feet quickly and with confidence. Multiple institutions focus on prevention first and on programs to reduce prolonged unemployment. Measures are in place to support vulnerable families and reduce youth poverty and homelessness. Not every issue can be fully solved through social programs, but groups consistently work together to blunt the impact of circumstance.

In 2025, all Tacoma families have resources for housing and shelter. Gaps in access to mental health have been addressed to support a decline in homelessness and to create a broader sense of mental health and wellbeing for all Tacoma residents. Families in poverty increasingly find new economic opportunities and that—even during periods of struggle—their most basic needs are met.

## Community Priorities

- 2A Increase housing security.** Tacoma residents want everyone to have shelter and to feel secure in their housing options.
- 2B Improve services to youth and vulnerable populations.** Tacoma cherishes its youth and other vulnerable residents; providing services to them is a priority.
- 2C Reduce poverty.** Reducing poverty is the best way to ensure that all Tacoma residents have resources to meet their needs.

## Accountability Measures

- Decrease the percent of individuals and families who experience **homelessness**
- Decrease the unmet need for **mental health services**
- Decrease the number of days that residents **report their mental health** was not good
- Reduce the percentage of Tacoma population in **poverty**
- Reduce the percentage of households spending more than 45% on **housing and transportation**

## Equity

In 2025, Tacoma residents experience no barriers to receiving services, and resources are applied to meet the greatest needs.

## Partnerships

### Key Partners

Tacoma Pierce County Health Dept.  
Pierce County  
Tacoma Housing Authority  
Nonprofit Coalition

### Focus Area Connections

The objectives for Human and Social Needs have strong linkages with related objectives for **Economic Vibrancy and Employment** and **Education and Learning**.

### City Champions

Neighborhood & Community Services  
Community & Economic Development

## Context

Adverse circumstances, personal decisions, and other social factors can deprive individuals of basic resources. However, human services that are delivered through both government agencies and community organizations can step in to help protect and support a city's vulnerable population.

### Tacoma Today

#### Homelessness and mental health are core concerns

- Homelessness was mentioned numerous times through feedback channels. Many noted a “nucleus around homelessness,” including addiction, mental health issues, and recidivism. Another participant noted that Tacoma needed to “focus on all aspects because they are interrelated.”
- Access to appropriate mental health services is an issue for both public welfare and specifically for at-risk populations. In the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, only 38% rated ‘mental health care’ positively.

#### Residents want support for families

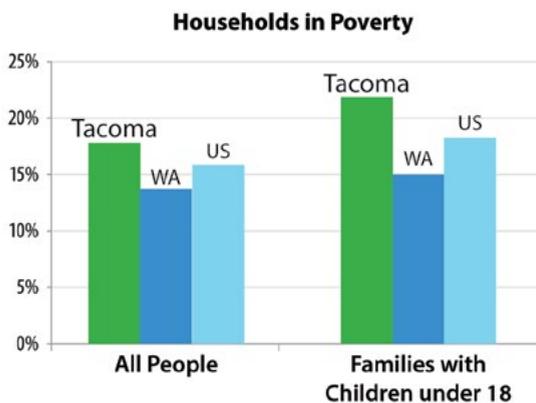
- Residents prioritize support for families, particularly single-parent households. One participant urged, “Treat those families as heroes, not a problem.” It was also noted that some families who need services can't receive them because of unfair eligibility requirements.

#### Residents want a more integrated and innovative service system

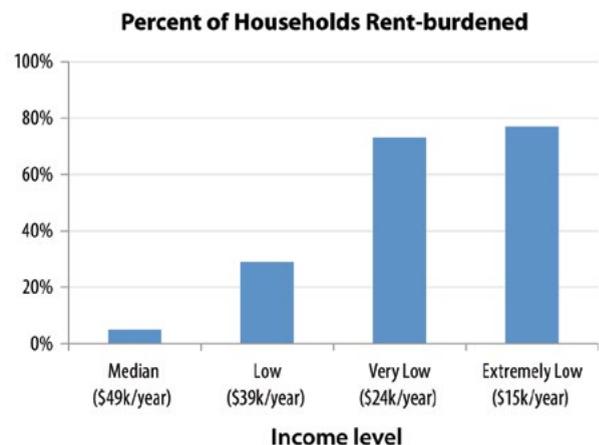
- Complaints of service fragmentation were common. In defining success in 2025, participants wanted “folks to know all services” and “more explicit collaboration and alignment of non-profits.”
- Participants noted the need to “recognize the changing role of government in service delivery.” In the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, “social services” was the fifth most popular spending priority.

#### Housing affordability matters

- Housing affordability is important, and linked to vibrant neighborhoods. One resident wanted “safe, affordable, integrated neighborhoods safe for children to walk and play freely.”
- Only 62% of respondents to the Citizen Satisfaction Survey reported they were not under housing stress, and 28% thought the city should spend more on housing services.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2012



“Rent burdened” households spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities.

Source: City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group, 2010

*Tacoma households experience high rates of poverty relative to Washington as a whole; families are even more challenged.*

*Low-income households are much more likely to be rent burdened.*

## Implementation

### Additional Partners

Faith-based Organizations  
Social Services  
Health Systems  
Community-based Organizations

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Continue to be responsible for land use and zoning — impacting housing choices and costs.
- Partner with both public and private housing developers.
- Help fund and collaborate with a myriad of community organizations working in human and social services.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

Human Rights Commission

Human Services Commission

Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities

Tacoma Community Redevelopment Authority Board

PATH Program

Positive Interactions Business Outreach Program

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

**“Up my contribution to the food banks, food kitchens and charities dealing with homeless.”**

*Susan Odenchantz*

**“Reduce homelessness.”**

*Al Cosio*

**“Advance financial literacy.”**

*Felix Guzman*

**“Assist City of Tacoma to introduce the community resources to the Cambodian community.”**

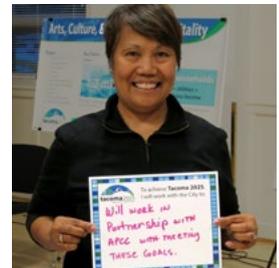
*Sinuon Hem*

**“Bring communities together. Build partnerships within Tacoma.”**

*Gerod Byrel*

**“Assist the city in intelligently setting priorities and addressing bias.”**

*Tom L Hilyard*



**“Bring information and create understanding of inclusion and community kuleana.”**

*Victoria Nokleby*



# 3: Economic Vibrancy and Employment

A vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all

## Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma has a vibrant economy that provides economic opportunities for all its residents. Economic activity is rooted in a vibrant downtown core, complemented by active neighborhood business districts. Tacoma has a number of substantial employers that provide jobs and income for many of Tacoma’s residents. Small businesses are recognized and supported as significant drivers of economic activity throughout the City. Tacoma’s business friendly environment has led to a surge in business growth and well-paying jobs. The majority of Tacoma’s residents now work in the city where they live.

### Community Priorities

- 3A **Increase the number and quality of jobs throughout Tacoma.** Tacomans will have more economic opportunities—partners will strive to recruit, retain, and expand job opportunities throughout the community.
- 3B **Diversify Tacoma’s living wage business base.** Providing jobs at living wages is a top priority; well paying jobs helps the community meet multiple goals.
- 3C **Improve neighborhood business districts.** A diversity of neighborhoods with vital business activity and housing options is essential to Tacoma.
- 3D **Strengthen downtown Tacoma as a business core and residential option.** A successful downtown Tacoma is a driver of Tacoma’s economic health and quality of life.

### Accountability Measures

- Increase the **number of jobs** in Tacoma
- Increase the percentage of households that meet or exceed **living wage** standards or are economically self-sufficient
- Increase **business sector diversity**
- Increase the percentage of residents positively rating the **quality of neighborhood business districts**
- Increase **district activity**
- Increase the assessed value and decrease the vacancy rate of **downtown property**
- Increase the number of **downtown workers and residents**

## Equity

In 2025, all of Tacoma’s residents have access to a variety of well-paying careers and all of Tacoma’s neighborhoods benefit from economic investment and prosperity.

## Partnerships

### Key Partners

Tacoma Public Utilities  
Port of Tacoma  
Chambers of Commerce  
Economic Development Board  
Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma  
Tacoma Regional Convention and Visitor’s Bureau

### Focus Area Connections

The objectives for **Economic Vibrancy and Employment** have strong linkages with related objectives for **Education and Learning**.

### City Champions

Community & Economic Development

## Context

To support a vibrant economy, government policies often aim to retain, and expand businesses. In turn, businesses will provide benefits that residents value, such as jobs, income, improved quality of life, and revenues for the operation of local government. Economic vibrancy can take many forms, and each city charts its own economic development path.

### Tacoma Today

#### Current economic opportunities do not meet residents' expectations

- Tacoma, like many cities across the nation, was hit hard by the recession. In 2012, Tacoma had 10% fewer jobs than in 2007, and unemployment among residents had soared from 4.8% to 8.3%.
- Respondents' perception of local economic health is below the national benchmark. In the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, only 33% of respondents rate Tacoma's overall economic health as good/excellent, and only 34% believe Tacoma's management of economic development is good/excellent. Median household income is lower in Tacoma than in Pierce County and Washington State.
- Residents also want a skilled workforce. One resident said, "Entrepreneurial support and education creates a workforce who are more in control of the future."



Sources: Puget Sound Regional Council; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

*Tacoma's Economy was hit hard by the recession, but it is recovering.*

#### Focus on "locally-grown" businesses

- Residents have voiced the desire for more local jobs. Commercial activity in downtown and in neighborhood districts is very important. A respondent to the City's Engage Tacoma website wrote, "The City should continue to support economic growth in core neighborhoods including 6th, Proctor, downtown, Lincoln and S Tacoma Way. Encourage density in these neighborhoods and build up, not out."
- Of survey respondents, 47% said the City should spend more on small business development, compared to only 27% who said the City should spend more on large economic development projects. Attendees of the July 30, 2014 outreach event, along with participants in community outreach, all generally agreed that the government should provide more support to small businesses.
- Tacoma residents also want a more business-friendly city. Only half think Tacoma provides good businesses and services and slightly less than half say the City should do more to support small and growing businesses. These feelings are even more strident among residents of color and minority businesses.

	Median income
Tacoma	\$50,653
Pierce County	\$58,056
Washington	\$58,592
United States	\$52,176

	Median Hourly Earnings
Tacoma	\$15.89
Pierce County	\$16.83
Washington	\$16.43
United States	\$15.19

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2013

*Tacoma's median income and wages lag behind Pierce County and Washington.*

## Implementation

### Additional Partners

World Trade Center of Tacoma  
Labor Unions  
Healthcare Industry  
Joint Base Lewis–McCord  
College and Universities

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Provide economic development services for existing and new businesses.
- Partner with regional and local economic development organizations.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

City Events and Recognition Committee

Neighborhood Business Districts

Foss Waterway Development Authority

Public Utility Board

Mayor's Commission on International Relations

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

**"Be a Tacoma champion!  
Watch Tacoma grow.  
You'll like Tacoma."**

*Brett Santhuff*

**"Attract private investment"**

*Su Dowie*

**"Continue to improve the Lincoln area."**

*Leslie Young*

**"Continue to cultivate a strong and agile workforce."**

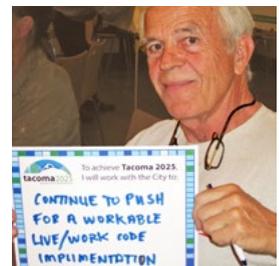
*Brian Humphreys*

**"Create & preserve good jobs."**

*Abby Lawlor*

**"Create a culture of success that permeates our schools, our businesses, our local government! We can do this together."**

*Fannie Kelley*



**"Develop a sense of community in my neighborhood."**

*Ryan Webster*



# 4: Education and Learning

Thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning.

## Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma has a rich learning environment, expanding beyond classroom walls and beyond even student homes. Strong partnerships between the formal K-12 school system and cultural institutions, governments, and non-profit organizations, provide kids with a multitude of hands-on learning experiences. Children begin school excited and ready to learn because of great early learning experiences. Continuous parental involvement means that learning extends beyond the school day. Young adults emerge from the school system ready to pursue college, technical schools, or other forms of professional development. The community's youth can follow their dreams, and have economic opportunities to do so locally if they choose, as Tacoma's economy thrives on the well-trained talents of its youth.

### Community Priorities

- 4A **Close the education achievement gaps.** Helping all of Tacoma's youth succeed through quality education is key to the community's future.
- 4B **Prepare people to succeed in Tacoma's workforce.** All residents should be prepared to succeed at jobs that are located in Tacoma or anywhere.

### Accountability Measures

- Increase **kindergarten readiness**
- Increase the percentage of **third grade students** meeting or exceeding reading proficiency
- Increase total **high school graduation** rates
- Increase **post-secondary degrees**
- Increase the percentage of graduates from local **educational institutions** (workforce training and universities) gaining employment

## Equity

In 2025, Tacoma has sustainable partnerships with educational institutions, government agencies and community members to close achievement gaps and propel the next generation to success.

## Partnerships

### Key Partners

Tacoma Public Schools  
Educational Stakeholders  
Foundation for Tacoma Students  
Higher Education Institutions  
Workforce Central

### Focus Area Connections

The objectives for **Education and Learning** have strong linkages with related objectives for **Human and Social Needs** and **Economic Vibrancy and Employment**.

### City Champions

Neighborhood & Community Services  
Tacoma Public Library

## Context

Education helps children develop the ability to think critically, use technical skills, and learn throughout life. A rich learning environment benefits the entire community—and benefits from the entire community’s support. Additionally, in an increasingly global and competitive economy, post-secondary education and life-long learning opportunities are critical to maintaining a capable local workforce.

### Tacoma Today

#### Education is critical to Tacoma’s future

- Residents frequently expressed a demand for better schools and linked education with higher quality of life. One wrote that in 2025, Tacoma will be “a city that has a great education system and good city to raise kids.” The Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee has emphasized the high return for Tacoma on investments in education and the need for institutional coordination.

#### Education is a community process

- Neighborhood-specific conditions can impact education. One resident emphasized, “we need to focus our energy around education,” by coordinating social service funding, targeting at-risk groups, and addressing neighborhood-specific issues. Residents voiced support for schools

and teachers, and noted the need for partnerships and collaboration beyond school walls.

- Only 47% of survey respondents rated child care/preschool positively, although this is in line with the national benchmark average. Residents also mentioned the need for early childhood education, noting “gaps start at earliest ages.”

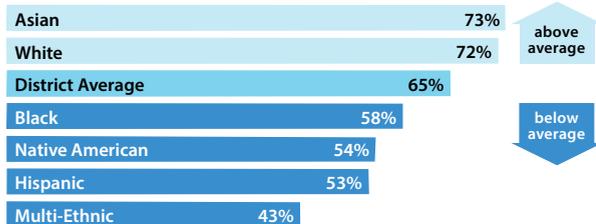
#### Educational equity is a concern

- Concerns over equity in schools emerged in many forms. Residents wanted education for *all* Tacoma kids. Beyond the achievement opportunity gap, the various issues mentioned included the need to address racial discrimination, support for the LGBTQ community, as well as, resources for non-English speakers.

#### Education is a workforce issue

- In many ways, education never stops. Learning—formal and informal—contributes to professional success, and many noted the need to support and improve Tacoma’s workforce. People in all industries and occupations benefit from education and training.

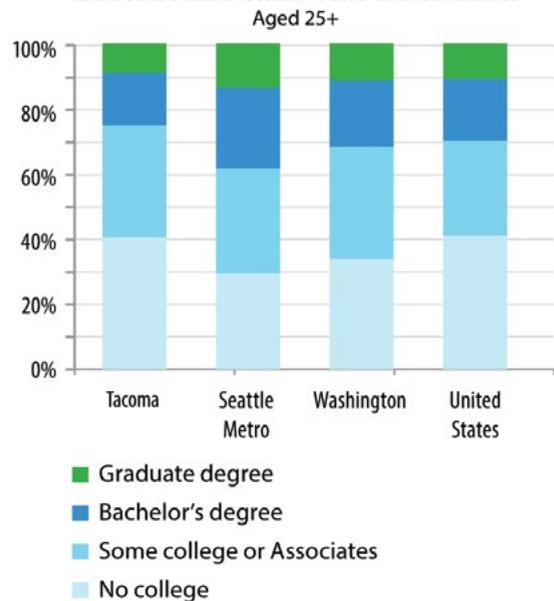
### Students Meeting Third-grade Reading Standards



Source: Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

*Two-thirds of Tacoma third graders meet state reading standards. Performance is lower among some racial and ethnic minorities.*

### Educational Attainment of Residents



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010 - 2013

*Tacoma’s workforce is less educated than the regional workforce. This isn’t the only sign of workforce preparedness, but it is important.*

## Implementation

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Collaborate with the school district, higher education institutions, and workforce development organizations.
- Work on creating safe places for children and families.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

Library Board

Human Rights Commission

Human Services Commission

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

**"Significantly increase the graduation rate, and close the achievement gap!"**

*Kent Roberts*

**"Be an advocate for Tacoma to the youth to stay and keep their talents and skills here!"**

*Kasey Williams*

**"Increase cultural competency and give ALL students a fair shot at education!"**

*Jennifer Alsawadi*

**"Engage Pierce County higher educational institutions in addressing education and learning objectives."**

*John Hickey*

**"Develop action steps for Education & Learning."**

*Jene Jones*

**"Increase high school graduation and post-secondary completion while closing opportunity gaps for children, youth & families."**

*Julia Garnett*



**"Continue to cultivate a strong and agile workforce."**

*Brian Humphreys*



# 5: Arts and Cultural Vitality

**A vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community.**

## Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma is widely recognized for its flourishing arts and culture. A prolific arts scene is nourished by affordable housing and studio space. The revitalized theater and dome districts feature historic venues that are gloriously restored, while a stunning and vibrant museum campus attracts nationwide visitors. People from all walks of life — and especially students and youth — enjoy exceptional access to a broad variety of cultural activities. Arts and heritage are fundamental to Tacoma’s brand and self-image — attracting and retaining creative residents, while stimulating economic development and neighborhood vitality, and encouraging a widespread embrace of the community’s ethnic diversity.

### Community Priorities

- 5A Increase participation in arts and culture.** Tacoma’s impressive arts and cultural scene offers opportunities that can enrich everyone’s lives.
- 5B Embrace Tacoma’s diversity of people, places, and cultures.** Active celebration of Tacoma’s diversity will help the community succeed economically and socially.
- 5C Leverage and strengthen Tacoma’s arts and cultural assets.** Tacoma’s excellent collection of arts and cultural facilities and historic buildings provides an economic advantage in attracting residents and investment.

### Accountability Measures

- Increase the number of **youth participating** in arts and cultural events in Tacoma
- Increase **attendance** at arts and cultural events
- Increase the **economic impact** of creative and cultural events in Tacoma
- Increase percentage of all business activity represented by **creative industries**

## Equity

In 2025, Tacoma celebrates and fosters ethnically diverse and culturally rich contributions and programs from all community sectors, particularly youth.

## Partnerships

### Key Partners

Tacoma Public Schools  
Tacoma Public Library  
Arts Community  
Metro Parks  
Nonprofit Coalition

### Focus Area Connections

The objectives for **Arts and Cultural Vitality** have strong linkages with related objectives for **Education and Learning**.

### City Champions

Community & Economic Development  
Neighborhood & Community Services  
Office of Equity & Human Rights  
Public Assembly Facilities

## Context

Arts and culture contain the spirit of a city. Creative human expression inspires community members and attracts visitors. Celebrating cultural and religious identity brings people together. Music can stir emotions. Art can challenge residents to see the world in new ways. Festival and events can educate communities about each other. From cultural heritage to contemporary art, human creativity in a city embodies the past, present, and future. In turn, these strengthen social relationships, civic engagement, and neighborhood vitality. A city's identity is grounded in its proud cultural heritage and arts scene.

### Tacoma Today

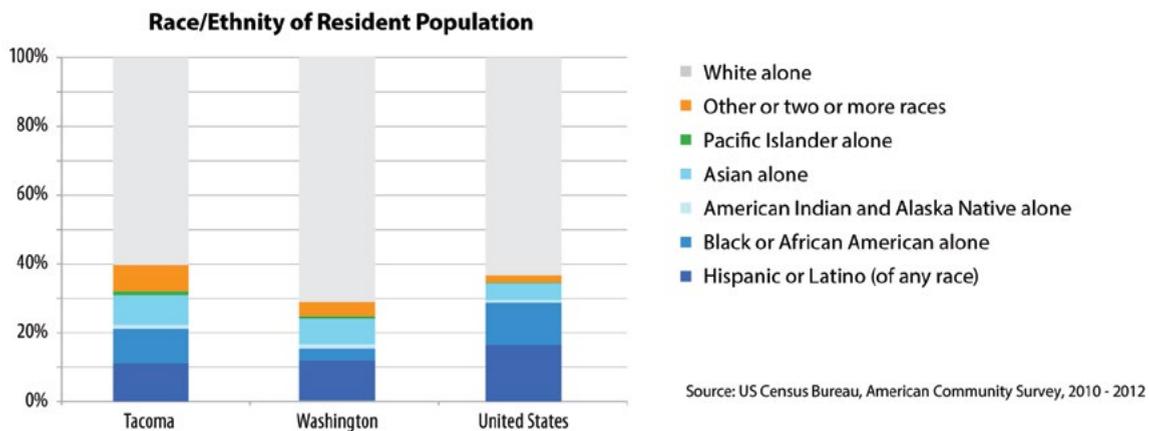
#### Strong support for the arts

- Residents voiced strong support of and pride in the Tacoma arts scene, urging the City to “not bring something in [but rather to] nurture and grow what is already here.” An emphasis was also placed on the unique diversity of the arts scene, including graffiti, museums, music, and ethnic festivals.
- Residents want Tacoma to be ‘an international destination for the arts.’ One resident wanted “a music, art, and culture hub comparable to Austin, TX.”

- However, access to these activities is unequal and varies by ethnicity and socioeconomic background. Perhaps as a result, the survey found a statistically significant difference in support for them, with 68% of white respondents vs. only 49% of nonwhites rating these activities positively.

#### Diversity and history are key aspects of Tacoma's identity

- Tacoma's history is intricately related to many residents' identity. Several members of the public related stories of their grandparents working in Tacoma or migrating here. The community expressed pride in its built environment and historic buildings.
- Diversity and heritage are points of pride. The Tacoma 2025 Steering Committee has said that cultural and ethnic diversity is one of Tacoma's distinguishing factors. It underpins the rich arts scene and gives character to its neighborhoods.



*Tacoma's is one of the most diverse areas in Washington.*



*1.2 million people visited arts and culture events in Tacoma in 2011.*

Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity IV: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the City of Tacoma.

## Implementation

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Focus economic development and planning activities around arts and historic preservation.
- Fund and collaborate with a myriad of community organizations working in arts and culture.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

City Events and Recognition Committee

Tacoma Arts Commission

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Sister City Council

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

### "Increase Arts!"

*Lauren Walker*

### "Expand the outreach of the arts into all elements of the community"

*Dick Ammerman*

### "Invigorate the community by increasing involvement and engagement of the arts through active participation."

*Sarah Ioannides*

### "Increase access to the arts among young people."

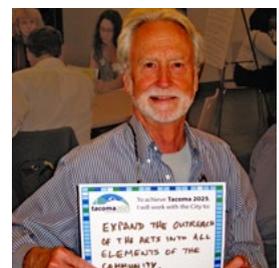
*Matt Hudgins*

### "Tell people about what Tacoma has to offer."

*Pat Babbitt*

### "I commit to work with the city to provide more vibrant access to Shakespeare and cultural education to all youth."

*Kristie Worthey*





# 6: Built and Natural Environment

Outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.

## Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma's residents and community leaders are committed to a specific and funded program of on-going stewardship of its natural and built systems. Tacoma has a complete and high quality transportation system that is focused on the mobility needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. Residents continue to be proud of their great parks and open spaces. Tacoma's equity, economic, and environmental sustainability program is a model for other communities, and the foundation for Tacoma's healthy people and many vibrant neighborhoods.

### Community Priorities

- 6A Increase transportation options.** Tacomans need to be mobile, with transportation choices including transit, bicycling, and walking.
- 6B Sustain and improve Tacoma's natural environment.** Tacoma residents treasure their outstanding parks and stunning natural setting; these must be sustained.
- 6C Grow and enhance the vitality of Tacoma's neighborhoods.** Transit-oriented and infill development, as well as reuse of historic buildings and districts, provides housing, economic, and environmental benefits.
- 6D Improve and maintain Tacoma's streets.** Tacoma's residents are concerned about the condition of their streets; maintenance is a top priority.

### Accountability Measures

- Increase the percentage of population using **alternative modes** (bike, walk, transit) for work trips and Tacoma's walk score
- Increase percentage of residents **visiting a park** and percentage **satisfaction** with park amenities
- Decrease number of days exceeding the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's **fine particle pollution** target
- Improve **stormwater quality**
- Increase number of structures designated as historical, added to **historical** districts, rehabilitated, or reused
- Increase the percentage of **streets** in good or excellent condition

## Equity

In 2025, Tacoma's neighborhoods with the most need will have natural and built environments that are sustainable and healthy for all.

## Partnerships

### Key Partners

Metro Parks  
Pierce Transit  
Tacoma Housing Authority  
Chamber  
Citizen Committees Boards and Commissions

### Focus Area Connections

The objectives for **Natural and Built Environment** have strong linkages with related objectives for **Health and Safety** and **Economic Vibrancy and Employment**.

### City Champions

Community & Economic Development  
Office of Environmental Policy & Sustainability  
Environmental Services  
Planning & Development Services  
Public Works

## Context

The natural and built environment supports all aspects of a city's livability. Infrastructure enables mobility, housing choices, and broadband access. Preserving the environment ensures that future generations can enjoy natural resources. The physical layout of cities is the foundation upon which a community thrives. Each city must balance its infrastructure needs and its assessment of environmental quality.

### Tacoma Today

#### *Transportation infrastructure needs to be improved*

- Residents emphasized the need to improve road conditions, and 'potholes' repeatedly came up in their feedback.
- Years of budget cuts have made transportation investments challenging, and over 50% of Tacoma's residential roads and 44% of arterial streets are in poor or failed condition.

#### *Parks, open spaces, and natural systems are essential elements of livability*

- Metro Parks maintains nearly 3,000 acres of parks and open space in Tacoma. Tacoma residents like their City parks: 79% rated them positively. One resident exclaimed, "Pt. Defiance is amazing," and another requested, "continued strong commitment to parks." However, another resident online emphasized, "parks should include unprogrammed open space." Residents also wanted greenery more distributed to "integrate/ complement built and natural environments," while community gardens and tree cover could help "get rid of concrete jungle."

#### *Residents need an effective and efficient transportation mobility system*

- Tacoma residents are multi-modal. Forty seven percent frequently used public transit rather than driving, higher than the benchmark average, and 62% walked or biked instead of driving. Thirty-six percent believe the City should spend more on transit services and 27% on pedestrian and bike infrastructure.
- Survey respondents approved of the overall ease of travel, with 67% rating it positively. Satisfaction with all travel modes was in line with national averages, but travel by public transit and travel by bicycle had the fewest positive ratings, 42% and 45% respectively.

#### *Residents are passionate about sustainability and sense of place*

- Residents expressed a clear desire to not just maintain the status quo, but also rather strive for environmental innovation and improvement. They called for environmental sustainability in a way that reflects Tacoma's sense of place, including buildings, neighborhoods, and built infrastructure.
- One resident expressed enthusiasm at the July 30, 2014 event: "Impressed with the sustainability stuff and looking at the STAR stuff it seems the city I most want Tacoma to be is one that continues to improve on those. Good job so far, much still to do!"

#### *Air quality has improved over the past decade*

- Overall, air quality has improved over the past decade, though wood burning in the winter still contributes to several unhealthy air days. Although 62% of residents rated Tacoma's natural environment as good or excellent overall, only 48% gave a comparable rating to air quality.

**50%** Residential roads are in poor condition

**44%** Arterial streets are in poor condition

**47%** Residents who frequently use transit service instead of driving

**91%** Residents who frequently visit Tacoma parks

## Implementation

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Build and maintain local streets and roads.
- Partner with local, regional, state, and national agencies in the planning and provision of road, transit, and other alternative modes of transportation.
- Provide strategic directions for land use, environmental sustainability, and climate change.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

Board of Building Appeals

Parking Transportation Advisory Group

Transportation Commission

Planning Commission

Sustainable Tacoma Commission

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

### "Work on Pierce Transit funding."

*Debbie Winskill*

### "Improve the aesthetics of the Hilltop."

*Nancy Bishop*

### "Increase outreach for public environmental events in the UPS community."

*Sierra Coccoziello*

### "Help accomplish equitable active (biking, walking, and transit) access to all of the City's unique treasures (physical and human)."

*Kendal Reid*

### "Galvanize the arts and cultural sector as a strong & vital partner."

*Andy Buelow*

### "Spread excitement about our history and our potential. Admit it, Tacoma you're beautiful!"

*Deborah Anderson*



### "Plan and implement high-capacity, frequent, and reliable transit. By improving public transportation and increasing mobility options, my vision is a city where the automobile is no longer the dominant mode choice."

*Darin Stavish*



# 7: Government Performance

Efficient and effective government, guided by engaged residents.

## Opportunity

In 2025, Tacoma residents trust in their city government and civic institutions. Elected leaders and civil servants hold transparency and accountability as primary civic responsibilities. The community believes that local government is tackling the tough issues, and actively engaging residents and community partners in those endeavors. Residents engage in civic affairs, participate in government activities, and vote.

### Community Priorities

- 7A Ensure accountable, efficient, and transparent city services.** Tacoma's City Council and staff are committed to providing the city's residents with outstanding service.
- 7B Engage residents, stakeholders, and partners in the future of Tacoma.** Creating a better Tacoma requires engaged residents and strong partnerships.
- 7C Strengthen the City's fiscal sustainability.** Tacoma's ongoing stability requires increasing the tax base, managing costs, and monitoring tax burdens closely.

### Accountability Measures

- Improve **resident satisfaction** in services provided by Tacoma or confidence in City government
- Increase **City employee satisfaction**
- Improve Tacoma's **Fiscal Wellness Index** score
- Align the **City's workforce profile** with regional and national demographics
- Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to **make a positive impact** on their community

## Equity

In 2025, the City of Tacoma government will be inclusive, reflective of the community it serves and ensure that City resources are distributed equitably to residents and visitors.

### Partnerships

#### Key Partners

City Council  
Boards & Commissions  
Residents

#### Focus Area Connections

**Government Performance** is the cornerstone of achieving all of Tacoma 2025's ambitious goals and objectives. It connects to **all six** other focus areas.

#### City Champions

The City of Tacoma

## Context

Municipal government is responsible for delivering key services to its community, and must be accountable for its actions, responsive to feedback, and effective in its efforts. A poorly performing government can diminish a city's vitality; a well performing government can help improve nearly all aspects of community life. Knowing that a municipal government cannot do everything, each city government chooses its own priorities.

### Tacoma Today

#### *Government performance is headed in the right direction but more progress is needed*

- Overall, Tacoma residents rated issues of governance below the national average. Overall confidence in Tacoma government was 32% positive. We ranked 46 out of 57 comparison communities and are lower than the benchmark. Employment levels in the past decade have dropped, while population and service demand have not.
- Many were sceptical at the July 30, 2014 public event, but many were also excited, noting that this event seemed like a turning point. One resident wrote, "have more events like Tacoma 2025 to gather feedback and generate conversation."

#### *Community engagement is high*

- Over 57% thought opportunities to participate in community matters were good or excellent and 44% volunteered regularly.

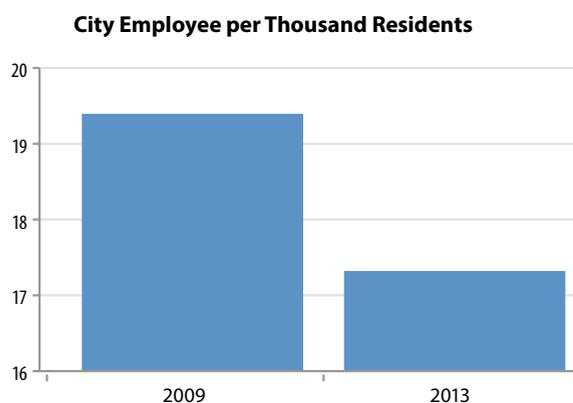
- Despite lower than average perceptions of City government, residents are still civically engaged. 82 percent reported voting in local elections. 16 percent attended local public meetings and 33 percent watched on the City's local governmental station, TV Tacoma. These are in line with national averages.

#### *Engagement, partnership, transparency, and accountability are areas of focus*

- Residents expressed a desire for transparency and accessible information, noting that many public documents and plans are large, complex, and difficult to read. Only 49% reported access to public information positively, while 39% thought City government was welcoming resident involvement.
- Some community participants wanted more partnerships, noting that the "City has its own role," and there is a need to "strengthen neighborhood organizations," and have "more city/community partnerships."

#### *Fiscal responsibility, stability, and sustainability are core values of residents*

- The City has made large strides in improving its fiscal position; however, significant challenges still remain. General Fund Revenues are expected to increase by 2.06% annually through 2020, but expenditures are expected to increase 2.16% to maintain existing levels of service (2015 to 2020 Financial Forecast). The number of City staff has decreased from 4,020 in fiscal year 2009-10 to 3,524 in fiscal year 2013-14.



Source: City of Tacoma Employment; US Census Bureau

**2000+** Number of Tacomans who participated in Tacoma 2025

*Budget cuts have meant the City has less staff to provide services to more people.*

## Implementation

### City Role

To help realize Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma will:

- Have created staff capacity to implement Tacoma 2025.
- Measure progress toward Tacoma 2025 on an annual basis.

## How to get involved

You can help make Tacoma 2025 a reality by volunteering through one of many community organizations, or by participating in the work of the following City boards, commissions, and programs:

Board of Ethics

Civil Service Board

Public Utility Board

Charter Review Committee

Fiscal Sustainability Task Force

Joint Municipal Action Committee

## Personal Commitments

To achieve Tacoma 2025, I will work with the City to:

**"Make our goals specific, measurable and attainable by 2025."**

*Kent Roberts*

**"Overcome the adversities that may block the success of the strategic vision."**

*Aaron Winston*

**"Create a culture of success that permeates our schools, our businesses, our local government! We can do this together!"**

*Fannie Kelley*

**"Ensure Accountability and Inclusion."**

*City Manager, T.C. Broadnax*

**"Bring more resources to maintain our assets."**

*Mayor Marilyn Strickland*

**"Bring people together to create community."**

*Hillary Ryan*





Art of the American West  
OPENS NOV 13



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