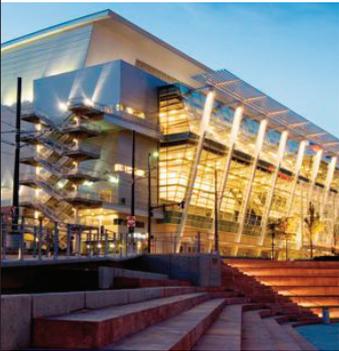


CITY OF TACOMA  
2013 LEGISLATIVE  
AGENDA



## LEGISLATIVE PHILOSOPHY

The City is a first class, charter city endowed by the State Constitution and laws and by its citizens with the authority to raise revenue and provide services necessary to carry out the vision set by the City Council.

In its relationship with the State and Federal governments, the City always:

- Seeks the broadest authority for our citizens and the City Council to make decisions locally.
- Seeks to avoid the assumption of the costs of services from other governments without adequate revenue.
- Seeks options in both revenue-raising and in approaches to providing services so our citizens and the City Council can determine for themselves the best way to meet their needs.
- Seeks new efficiencies and partnerships that can enhance service delivery and reduce costs.
- Seeks opportunities to help our partners achieve success in order to further improve the community.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City supports the use of economic development tools that facilitate urban redevelopment and encourage development, including affordable housing, in transit station areas. This may include value capture tools like tax increment financing, local improvement district legislation, and funding of existing tools such as local infrastructure financing.

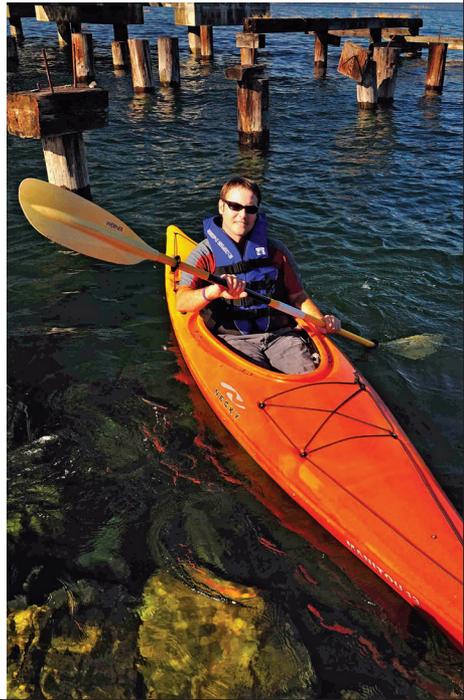
Theft of metals such as copper wiring, bronze fittings, aluminum railings and other items, from public and private property is a serious problem. In addition to the economic loss, the thefts often put public safety at risk. The City has worked closely with metal recycling firms, scrap dealers, pawn shops, and second hand dealers to address the problem locally but a statewide approach is necessary. Stakeholders have been working to develop a comprehensive approach to the issue. The City has been part of this effort and will support the resulting legislation.

The “paramount” duty of the State is to “make ample provision for the education of all children...” and the Legislature is faced with a significant challenge to meet this responsibility in light of the recent McCleary decision by the State Supreme Court. Any solution to this problem cannot create winners and losers between the state’s school districts and must still provide the opportunity for local communities to meet unique local needs. Further, the State must begin to restore funding to higher education institutions. One way would be to emphasize funding for select clusters or sectors of our economy such as cyber security, clean water, health care and others.

## ENVIRONMENT:

The City supports creation of a sustainable funding source to assist local governments with obligations under Federal storm water regulations. Such funding should be tailored to favor those jurisdictions that are currently required to implement their permit obligations over those that have successfully sought to delay implementation. Funding should also favor projects that are designed to mitigate costs for private development through innovative public projects.

To that end, the City will seek \$4 million for capacity enhancement at its gravel pit facility which will assist new private development and re-development of private property in the Clover Creek drainage basin.



## FISCAL – TAX REGULATIONS:

The City believes local control of tax and regulatory processes is in the best interest of city residents and businesses. Local control allows innovation and greater flexibility to match taxes and regulations to a changing local economy.

- The City will oppose special interest efforts to restrict or otherwise regulate its authority to license and tax, including but not limited to collection and control of the municipal business and occupation tax.

As part of its 2012 budget, the Legislature diverted local liquor excise taxes to the State. It also capped the fees authorized to local government in Initiative 1083 and intends to capture all growth in this fund for State needs going forward. The fiscal impact of these actions on Tacoma is \$1.3 million in 2013 and growing amounts going forward. The City supports restoring this revenue to local government as the State prepares its next biennial budget.

The voters of Tacoma have approved a permanent levy of 50 cents per thousand to pay for essential emergency medical services provided by the Tacoma Fire Department. Despite this approval, other provisions of state property tax law have resulted in reductions of this revenue and increased pressure on the City's General Fund to make up the difference. Revenue for this vital public service must be better protected.

- The City supports changes to EMS levy statutes that will increase the maximum levy rate to 75 cents per thousand and also protect the levy from erosion by placing it outside the 1 percent limit on taxes.

The State provided a sales tax credit that allowed construction of the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center as well as other public facilities around



the state. The sales tax credit runs for 25 years. Along with other public facility districts, the City supports pending legislation that will extend the sales tax for 15 additional years. This will reduce the impact of bond repayment on the convention center and, potentially, the City's General Fund.

Voters in Tacoma strongly supported Initiative 502, decriminalizing small amounts of marijuana for personal use and establishing a regulatory and tax framework for sale of the drug. Assuming the State is allowed to carry out the provisions of the initiative by the Federal government, there will be an undetermined amount of new revenue available to the City from the licensed retail sales. The City supports implementation of the initiative.

Tax breaks for specific businesses and industries can serve as an important economic development tool. A recent New York Times report documented that Washington forgoes more than \$2.3 billion a year in revenue due to tax breaks. State tax breaks can have an impact on local government because they deprive the State of revenue for important programs and can also impact local tax collections. There has been little, if any, analysis done to determine the success or usefulness of tax breaks.

- The City supports establishment of a systematic legislative review and sunset process for tax breaks.

Recent court decisions have overturned the long-held practice of water utilities picking up the cost of hydrants, shifting this cost to a general fund expenditure. A group of cities, counties, utilities and other interests have attempted to develop a legislative fix for this problem. The City has been a part of this effort and seeks a means to remove the cost of maintenance and use of hydrants from general fund responsibility.



## NEIGHBORHOODS

The City has launched a popular program of neighborhood clean-up and nuisance abatement. While this program has had some success, limitations in state law on a city's authority to apply a lien to property that contains a public nuisance have been a challenge.

- The City supports harmonizing the lien authority of cities with that of counties. A city should be able to apply a lien against property to allow the City to recover its costs in abating a nuisance. Liens should remain on the property until the costs of abatement are paid and the lien should have the same rank as state and local taxes in case of sale or foreclosure.

City neighborhoods can be negatively impacted by the actions of State agencies. Offenders who have been released from State custody have a need for

housing, but the location of this housing needs fair regulation and oversight by both the State and City. Landlords offering housing to offenders need to be part of their successful re-entry to the community.

- The City supports legislation that will encourage this participation, and improve communication between the State and local government concerning the release of offenders. The City will also oppose any effort to restrict its authority to license and regulate congregate rental housing.

People's Pool is an important community facility in the Hilltop neighborhood. The pool has been closed since 2008. The City and Metro Parks Tacoma have committed several million dollars to re-open the pool.

- A State appropriation of \$1 million is requested to assist with revenue producing opportunities at the facility and to enhance the pool's ability to meet modern energy efficiency standards.



## TRANSPORTATION

The City supports adoption of a new transportation revenue package, which may include tolling. Completion of SR-167, finishing the current I-5/SR-16 HOV project and initial work on improvements to I-5 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord must be in the package. Initial planning for extension of I-5 HOV lanes beyond S. 38th Street is also a priority. If there is no new revenue package, the transportation budget must include, at a minimum, sufficient funding for all property acquisition for SR-167 and all final design work.

Regardless of whether the Legislature approves a statewide transportation funding package, it must address ongoing shortfalls in funding for city arterial streets and other local transportation needs.

- The City supports increasing the councilmanic authority for transportation benefit district vehicle license fees from \$20 to \$40.
- The City supports adoption of a fee based street maintenance utility.

Similar funding mechanisms are in use in other states and result in a much higher level of citizen satisfaction with the maintenance of local streets.

## LONGER TERM ISSUES

Metro Parks STAR Center in South Tacoma is a tremendous asset and a model for bringing several levels of government and non-profits organizations together to build a community. State Capital Budget funds played an important role in building the project. Tacoma's east side is a logical location to build off the knowledge gained from the STAR Center to craft a unique facility for this neighborhood where a severe lack of recreational opportunities exists.

- The City will work with other interested parties to develop a plan for an eastside community center based on the STAR Center model. This will include talking with legislators about the project in preparation for future capital budget requests, and support for initial project funding if the opportunity arises.

Completion of SR-167 from Puyallup to the Port of Tacoma is an essential project to enhance mobility in the region, particularly the movement of freight in and out of Puget Sound ports. Completion of the project is estimated to cost \$1.6 to \$2 billion. A project of this size will be difficult to fully fund



through traditional methods and may require tolls and other alternatives and more than one funding package. It may also be desirable to combine the project with another regional highway as a “mega project” in order to secure better financing alternatives. A solution that should not be on the table is scaling SR-167 back to anything less than a multi-lane limited access highway.

- The City supports SR-167 completion including the use of alternative funding methods.

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## CITY OF TACOMA

### **Mayor**

Marilyn Strickland

### **Deputy Mayor**

Marty Campbell, Position 4

### **Council Member**

Anders Ibsen, Position 1

### **Council Member**

Robert Thoms, Position 2

### **Council Member**

Lauren Walker, Position 3

### **Council Member**

Joe Lonergan, Position 5

### **Council Member**

Victoria Woodards, At-Large Position 6

### **Council Member**

David Boe, At-Large Position 7

### **Council Member**

Ryan Mello, At-Large Position 8

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