



CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

WHAT IS TACOMA CREATES?

In 2015, the Washington State Legislature recognized the numerous public, educational and economic benefits provided by the state's cultural organizations and passed a law that established the ability for each community across the state to invest in its arts, culture, science and history by raising funds through a modest voter-approved increase in either the sales or property tax.

Utilizing this new state authority, the Arts & Culture Coalition of Pierce County, in partnership with Tacoma city leaders, educators, community groups, and businesses, proposes Tacoma Creates.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF TACOMA CREATES?

Tacoma Creates is designed to make Tacoma's neighborhoods and communities more vibrant and interesting places, create outlets and opportunities for youth to open their minds, open more doors, and make arts and culture more sustainably accessible to the broader public and city. In turn, Tacoma will generate greater economic activity, while investing in programs that advance the principles of equity and access.

For Tacoma Creates, "equity" means to create greater inclusiveness, increased diversity, and broader participation in cultural experiences, community programs, and arts and culture organizations. And "access" means that economic status should never be a barrier to experience and enjoy all of the arts and culture that Tacoma has to offer. The benefits of Tacoma Creates will accrue to all of Tacoma's residents but especially lower income families and K-12 students. The intention is to strengthen the cultural identity, spark the creative energy and promote the vibrancy of our neighborhoods and communities that inspire our best notions of Tacoma.

HAVE THERE BEEN PROGRAMS LIKE TACOMA CREATES ELSEWHERE AROUND THE COUNTRY?

The program is modeled on other similarly successful programs in the nation, including the Denver metro area, St. Louis and the state of Minnesota. The program in Denver has been in place for 30 years, distributing \$40 million a year to scientific and cultural organizations through a Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. Due to the program's success, it has been repeatedly renewed by voters with larger shares of the vote on each renewal.

WHAT STEPS NEED TO HAPPEN FOR TACOMA CREATES TO BE IMPLEMENTED?

The Arts & Culture Coalition of Pierce County, in partnership with Tacoma city leaders, educators, community groups, and businesses, plans to ask the Tacoma City Council to put a modest sales tax increase on the November 2018 ballot to fund Tacoma Creates.

Legislation would need to be introduced to the Tacoma City Council, and the proposal would be the subject of public hearings and committee meetings before a Council vote. Prior to asking Tacoma leaders to initiate this process, the Arts & Culture Coalition of Pierce County will seek input from Tacoma community organizations, neighborhoods and residents in order to gather broad feedback on Tacoma Creates before the proposal is finalized.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IF THE CITY COUNCIL PUTS THE SALES TAX INCREASE ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT?

If voters approve the measure in November, the 0.1 percent sales tax increase will raise \$5 million a year in critical funding for Tacoma's arts and culture programs.

The tax increase would cost just \$13 a year for the average Tacoma household. The program would generate \$5 million a year over the course of seven years, for a total of \$30 million.

DOES THE SALES TAX INCREASE END?

Tacoma Creates is not permanent. After seven years, voters would need to approve any extension of the sales tax increase. Who is supporting Tacoma Creates?

The Arts & Culture Coalition of Pierce County consists of 26 arts, culture and heritage organizations located in the City of Tacoma and throughout Pierce County. The coalition was formed in 2009 to collectively spark interest in Pierce County's many arts and culture offerings.

Each of the organizations is dedicated to providing convenient, intimate, and richly distinct arts, culture and heritage experiences of the highest quality, right here in our community and throughout Tacoma.

WHAT WILL TACOMA CREATES ACCOMPLISH?

- Tacoma Creates will enhance and extend arts, culture, science and heritage education for Tacoma's youth and school-age children. Cultural organizations would partner with the Tacoma School District and other community based or non-profit organizations to provide both in school, after school and summer programs in every Tacoma neighborhood and offer more field trips to arts, culture, science and heritage organizations. The transportation for such trips would be provided as part of this program.
- Tacoma Creates will expand access for all Tacoma residents to arts and cultural events, venues, performances, large-scale city events, community festivals, neighborhood activities and street fairs. The program would also reduce barriers for participation and involvement at every level, including financial barriers, so that everyone has the opportunity to access arts, culture, science and heritage programs and facilities, regardless of their economic means.
- Tacoma Creates will create new and additional resources for neighborhood programs and related cultural activities. The idea is to tap into and grow the creative spirit that makes our neighborhoods interesting and unique places.
- Finally, Tacoma Creates will benefit Tacoma's overall economy through increased economic activity generated by an enhanced arts and culture sector, greater number of tourists and other visitors for cultural activities, and promotion and support for jobs in creative fields and enterprises.

WHY SHOULD I SUPPORT TACOMA CREATES?

Arts, culture, science and heritage are part of what makes Tacoma special. They are integral to our city's distinctive identity, interwoven in our neighborhoods and indispensable to our children. Tacoma Creates will ensure that our city's arts, culture, science and heritage programs are accessible to all city residents, not just a chosen few. The initiative will make our community more vibrant, enrich the lives of our youth and boost our economy through increased tourism and cultural activity and additional jobs in creative fields.

HOW DOES TACOMA CREATES MESH WITH EXISTING PUBLIC OR PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN TACOMA?

Tacoma Creates builds on the significant public and private investment that methodically put into place by current and past Tacoma civic initiatives, including the revitalization of downtown Tacoma through its cultural assets and facilities; convention and tourism promotion; and UW-Tacoma.

Tacoma Creates also complements and reinforces Tacoma's strong network of successful youth, education and equity initiatives, such as Graduate Tacoma, the early childhood learning programs at the Children's Museum, Metro Parks' Whole Child Access Pass, Communities In Schools and the community partnerships of Tacoma Public Schools.

WHO WILL ADMINISTER AND ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY?

Tacoma Creates will be managed by the City of Tacoma's Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality. The office has experience working with non-profit and community-based organizations to administer grants, manage contracts, and oversee compliance in the use of public funds. The office will issue an annual report on how the funds were used, and how they achieved the Tacoma Creates objectives. Costs to administer the program will be capped at 8% of total funds.

An independent advisory board will also be appointed by the City Council to oversee Tacoma Creates, including the development of the criteria and guidelines for funding, and monitoring and evaluating the program results. The evaluation will be data driven, and monitoring will involve regular financial reviews of fund recipients to ensure program compliance.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS?

Under state law, any non-profit organization whose primary purpose is the advancement and preservation of science or technology, visual or performing arts, zoology, botany, anthropology, heritage, or natural history is eligible to receive funds. The non-profit must have a 2-year track record providing public programming. The non-profit's principal location and majority of activities must be within the City of Tacoma.

WHAT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO SMALLER NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS?

One of the goals of Tacoma Creates is to partner with and support smaller community and neighborhood-based organizations that may not have a lot of staffing resources but are nonetheless dedicated and working hard to create vibrant spaces through arts, culture, science and heritage programs or events within their respective communities. In order to grow this capacity, technical assistance will be provided by the city's Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality to develop and build the capabilities of smaller organizations to access and administer the funds and satisfy the program requirements. Application and guidelines for smaller organizations will be developed based on this recognition of limited resources.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE FOR THE LARGER ORGANIZATIONS?

Tacoma is known for its Museum and Theater Districts, and these pillars of the cultural arts and downtown Tacoma will be eligible to participate in a competitive application and evaluation process for funds to support sustainable implementation of increasing access, ensuring equity and inclusion and building diverse participation.



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