CHAPTER 1.45
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS 1

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1.45.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish policies in support of neighborhood involvement in the deliberations and actions of City government through the Neighborhood Council Program, and to establish a Standards and Guidelines document that defines administrative responsibilities and procedures for the recognition, expectations and funding of the Neighborhood Councils and the Community Council of Tacoma.

(Repealed and reenacted by Ord. 28195; passed Dec. 17, 2013; Ord. 25188 § 1; passed Sept. 22, 1992)

1.45.020 Intent.

It is the intent of the City to engage its neighborhoods as broadly as possible in the issues and concerns that directly affect them. The City will support and promote a Neighborhood Council Program to foster open a partnership of open communications between the City and its neighborhoods and to create an environment in which residents are afforded an opportunity to meaningfully participate in City government decisions in an advisory role, discuss City programs and policies that affect the neighborhood, bring neighborhood concerns, priorities, and goals to the attention of the City, and encourage diverse relationships and representative participation where residents feel included and empowered to contribute to improving the livability of their communities.

The City’s Neighborhood Council Program will support cooperation and consensus among residents and other diverse interests to craft solutions to mutual problems and to build a sense of personal pride in and responsibility for their neighborhoods. The City will support the Neighborhood Council Program in recruiting and developing diverse Neighborhood Council representation among participants that is equitable in its community engagement and that seeks to create an inclusive and accessible process, atmosphere including by the engagement of where community members, neighbors from low-income communities, communities of color, and other historically underrepresented populations, are represented in a way that reflects the neighborhood.

Involvement with the Neighborhood Councils is not intended to limit the activities, role, or importance of existing neighborhood organizations, neighborhood business districts, and block watch groups or other similar neighborhood advisory or advocacy groups. While it is expected that these groups will take an active part in the Neighborhood Council Program, it is intended that they, like the Neighborhood Councils, remain independent entities.

(Repealed and reenacted by Ord. 28195; passed Dec. 17, 2013; Ord. 25188 § 1; passed Sept. 22, 1992)

1.45.030 Standards and guidelines.

A Neighborhood Council Program Standards and Guidelines document will be adopted by resolution of the City Council created by the City Manager or their designee. In order to be eligible for funding or to act in an advisory capacity to the support from the City to advance neighborhood priorities, the Neighborhood Councils and Community Council must comply with administrative and procedural meet the expectations and requirements

1 Chapter 1.45 was repealed and reenacted by Ordinance 28195, passed December 17, 2013
Neighborhood Councils will serve independent of the City as the primary forum for discussions on City programs, policies, and neighborhood concerns for residents and participants within the Neighborhood Council boundaries. They will function as an advisory capacity to City government on matters concerning the general health, safety, and welfare of their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Council actions shall reflect the needs and wants of the neighborhoods existing within their boundaries and demonstrate equitable involvement in those actions. The responsibilities and functions, expectations of the Neighborhood Councils are contained in the Standards and Guidelines document.

(Repealed and reenacted by Ord. 28195; passed Dec. 17, 2013; Ord. 27466 § 1; passed Jan. 17, 2006; Ord. 26386 § 12; passed Mar. 23, 1999; Ord. 25966 § 1; passed Oct. 8, 1996; Ord. 25188 § 1; passed Sept. 22, 1992)

1.45.040 Neighborhood Council functions and responsibilities, duties and expectations.

A. Neighborhood Council boundaries. The City Council shall determine the boundaries of the Neighborhood Councils with the intention of recognizing existing neighborhood groups, and shall set those boundaries by resolution. A Neighborhood Council may propose boundary adjustments for consideration by the City Council, so long as there is written agreement by any impacted existing Neighborhood Councils prior to request for consideration by the City Council and no boundaries overlap. Individual Neighborhood Councils shall not submit proposed boundary changes to the City Council directly. The Community Council shall not reject any proposals by Neighborhood Councils to adjust boundaries as long as the proposal meets the above requirements, but may note their support or opposition to a proposal.

B. Formation of New Neighborhood Councils. The Community Council of Tacoma must consult with City staff prior to approval in order to create new Neighborhood Councils. New Neighborhood Councils may be considered to better represent diverse interests, provide fair and equitable representation, and better advocate for the needs of the neighborhood, but must meet the following requirements.

i. No more than two Neighborhood Councils will be created by the City Council in a calendar year.

ii. There may be no more than five Neighborhood Councils per City Council District.

iii. Neighborhood Council boundaries must have a population of at least three percent of the total population of Tacoma.

In order to create a new Neighborhood Council both the affected Neighborhood Councils and the new proposed Neighborhood Council must affirm in writing their consent to changing their boundaries so that no Neighborhood Council boundaries overlap. The proposed Neighborhood Council must hold a public meeting in the proposed boundary area to get public input on whether to form a new Neighborhood Council, and what form of governance the new body will take prior to submitting their proposal to the Community Council. The public meeting must be announced and advertised at a minimum two weeks in advance, and have at least 30 attendees signed in and/or have 80 signatures with addresses from the proposed boundary area supporting the proposed Neighborhood Council. After the public meeting, the Community Council of Tacoma must submit the public meeting notes, proposed boundaries of affected Neighborhood Councils, proposed leadership and governance of the new Neighborhood Council, and their recommendation to City staff for review. Following City staff review the proposal will be submitted and go to the City Council for consideration. The City Council must adopt by resolution the new Neighborhood Council and adjusted boundaries before they can operate.
Any resident, owner of property, business, or nonprofit and their employees, who live or work within a Neighborhood Council Boundary, may participate fully in that Neighborhood Council without conditions. Participation means attending meetings and events, voting, engaging in the creation of annual reports, budgets, and plans, and utilizing Neighborhood Council resources. Individual Neighborhood Councils may choose to adopt bylaws that limit members of the governing board to residents that live within the Neighborhood Council boundaries. Although the primary purpose of the Neighborhood Council Program is to foster open communication in which residents are afforded an opportunity to participate in government decisions in an advisory role, the ability to participate on a Neighborhood Council Board and/or to vote at general meetings shall not be restricted to neighborhood residents only. No Neighborhood Council may discriminate against any individual nor limit participation based on race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, or the presence or perceived presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability. It is the objective of the City Council for neighborhood residents, property owners, and business owners to have the opportunity to participate in the Neighborhood Council Program.

The Community Council of Tacoma shall act as a coalition of the individual Neighborhood Councils. The Community Council shall serve as a forum for discussion of issues of broad interest or citywide impact, and the advocacy of the needs of individual Neighborhood Councils. The Community Council of Tacoma will consist of representatives from each of the Neighborhood Councils selected by the means identified in the bylaws of the Community Council. The responsibilities and functions of the Community Council are contained in the Standards and Guidelines document.

The Neighborhood Council Program Coordinator shall be the main contact and support for the Neighborhood Councils and Community Council, shall be responsible for coordinating assistance to the Neighborhood Councils and Community Council, and shall request support from other City departments as
necessary. The Neighborhood Council Program Coordinator shall have the following specific responsibilities:

1. Support and promote property owner, business, and neighborhood participation within the Neighborhood Council program.

2. Promote and facilitate open communication between the City and the Neighborhood Councils and Community Council.

3. Act as an information clearinghouse and resource to the Neighborhood Councils and Community Council.

4. Notify the Neighborhood Councils, the Community Council, and other interested persons of meetings and hearings of citizen participation events.

5. Assist the Neighborhood Councils and the Community Council in planning and developing programs for citizen participation.

6. Receive and file Neighborhood Council bylaws and annual reports, review the bylaws and annual reports, and disburse them to the City Council and other City departments and make them available to the public.

7. Maintain contact information for all Neighborhood Council board members, officers, representatives to the Community Council, and individuals designated to receive all notices and other mailings on behalf of the Neighborhood and Community Councils.

8. Provide the contact information of those designated to receive all notices and other mailings on behalf of the Neighborhood and Community Councils to all City departments, and notify the departments of any changes.

9. Maintain a current map of all Neighborhood Council boundaries.

10. Maintain a City Resource Guide of key services and contacts for disbursement to the Neighborhood Councils and other stakeholders.

11. Conduct reviews of the Neighborhood Council Program for recommendations to the City Council.

B. Responsibilities of Other City Departments. All City departments shall:

1. Make a good faith effort to notify affected Neighborhood Councils of any significant policy matter which requires the exercise of City discretion and directly impacts the neighborhood. Notice should be provided as early in the planning or review process as possible. In no case shall notice be provided later than at the time required by established notification procedures. Notice of Citywide matters shall be provided to all the Neighborhood Councils and notice of matters affecting a specific locale of the City shall be forwarded only to the affected Neighborhood Councils. Notice shall be mailed
to the officers of each Neighborhood Council. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. Notice of pending land use/environmental cases, decisions, and threshold determinations under the State Environmental Policy Act shall be provided to the affected Neighborhood Councils.

c. Notice of all public hearings shall be provided to the Neighborhood Councils as requested by each individual council.

d. Copies of agendas for all citizen commissions, boards, committees, and the City Council shall be provided to the Neighborhood Councils as requested by each individual council.

e. Copies of City newsletters or other general communication mediums, as requested by each individual Neighborhood Council.

2. Make a good faith effort to solicit the position and reasoning of affected Neighborhood Councils on any significant policy matter which requires the exercise of City discretion.

3. Provide a list of the Neighborhood Councils and their contacts to the proponents of development and encourage the proponents to discuss their proposal with the affected Neighborhood Council(s).

4. Share information with the Neighborhood Councils and Community Council to assist them in performing their functions and responsibilities.

(Repealed and reenacted by Ord. 28195; passed Dec. 17, 2013; Ord. 25966 § 3; passed Oct. 8, 1996; Ord. 25188 § 1; passed Sept. 22, 1992)

1.45.080 Administrative provisions.

A. This chapter does not limit the right of any person or group to participate directly in the decision-making process of the City Council or any City department.

B. Compliance with the Neighborhood Council program is not jurisdictional. Failure of the City or any City department to comply with any provision of this chapter will not invalidate any later action taken by any officer of the City; any City commission, committee, or board; or the City Council.

C. It is not the intent of this chapter to provide for new procedures or processes for legislative enactment, policy formulation, quasi-judicial decision-making or administrative practices.

D. It is not the intent of the City to delegate any portion of its authority to the Neighborhood Councils or the Community Council.

E. Citizens Residents of the City of Tacoma retain all duties and obligations to participate in existing processes for legislative enactment, policy formulation, quasi and quasi-judicial decision-making or administrative practices. Participation in the Neighborhood Council program does not limit such duties and obligations.

(Repealed and reenacted by Ord. 28195; passed Dec. 17, 2013; Ord. 25966 § 4; passed Oct. 8, 1996; Ord. 25188 § 1; passed Sept. 22, 1992)

1.45.090 Review and revision.

The Neighborhood Council Program shall be reviewed and revised, if necessary, by the City Council at least every five years, with a corresponding presentation to the City Council by The City Manager or their Neighborhood Council Program Coordinator or other staff regarding the Program. The Program Coordinator or other staff regarding the Program will provide a presentation to the City Council on the overall state of the program and recommendations, if any, for revisions to the Tacoma Municipal Code.

It is suggested that the Community Council of Tacoma conduct a review of the Neighborhood Council Program every five years and provide recommendations for updates to the City Council.
1.45.100  **Repealed.**