

# DRAFT

## 2009 City of Tacoma State Legislative Priorities

### **Environment:**

- The City supports legislation that helps address implementation, with appropriate funding where necessary, of initiatives that are intended to address the impacts of climate change. This includes funding mechanisms, as well as land use and transportation issues.
- The City supports the efforts of the Puget Sound Partnership where its goals are consistent and not duplicative with climate change and growth management policies of the State that fall to local government to implement. Funding for local government planning and regulatory work will be required.
- The City supports programs to reduce particulate pollution that has caused the region to be in a non-attainment status under the Clean Air Act.

### **Fiscal:**

- The City supports adoption of tax increment financing as a replacement to programs such as LIFT (Local Infrastructure Financing Tool) and JDF (Job Development Fund) which have proved problematic as useful economic development tools.
- The City supports modification to the 1 percent limit on property taxes in order to protect the voter approved levy that supports emergency medical services.
- The City supports changes to local tax authority which remove non-supplanting, earmarking, and other limitations on the uses of such revenue.

### **Health and housing:**

- The City supports new and innovative tools, including tax increment financing, to improve housing alternatives, including affordable and workforce housing.
- The City supports full State funding of local public health jurisdictions.
- The City supports State action to provide access to high quality health care for all.

## **Transportation and infrastructure:**

- The City supports legislation to provide for rehabilitation of the Murray Morgan Bridge through a funding partnership between the City and State that will allow work on the bridge to begin in 2009.
- The City seeks an appropriation of \$4.5 million for use at Cheney Stadium. This appropriation is part of the continuing collective effort with the five minor league baseball communities.
- The City supports restoration of revenue and other improvements to the Public Works Trust Fund that will allow it to better meet local needs.
- The City supports new REET (Real Estate Excise Tax) authority for infrastructure purposes.
- The City supports adoption of fee based street utility legislation.
- The City supports the capital budget requests of the Martin Luther King Housing Development Authority for the Hilltop Renaissance Phase 2 project, the Foss Waterway Development Authority 16<sup>th</sup> Street Pier and Waterway Park project, the Foss Waterway Seaport Balfour Building project, and the Metropolitan Park District Linnick Memorial Project.

## Urban Agenda for 2009-2010 Washington State Legislature

### Infrastructure

Urban Agenda cities in the State of Washington call upon the Legislature to recognize the role that metropolitan areas play in the economic health of the state and in fulfilling growth management and climate change goals. To that end we urge the Legislature to provide funding and tools to urban areas in support infrastructure needed to meet these goals, including:

- Provide a constitutional fix to the existing street utility statute to provide cities with the authority to implement a street utility tax to help meet local street and transportation needs;
- Support creation of an infrastructure bank to provide grant assistance to urban cities;
- Enact comprehensive tax increment financing legislation; reform current community revitalization statute to make this a more viable tool; extend current LIFT law and provide funding to allow additional grants in 2009 and 2010;
- Modify existing REET laws to allow for up to 25% of funds to be used for maintenance of facilities constructed utilizing REET and harmonize allowable uses between REET 1 and REET 2.
- Focus a state stimulus package on urban infrastructure needs to assure best alignment of resources with employment and population centers.
- Maintain the integrity of the Public Works Trust Fund as a loan resource for local infrastructure.

### Safe Cities

Urban Agenda cities in the State of Washington call upon the Legislature to assure the State is our partner in keeping our citizens safe and healthy. To that end we urge the Legislature to provide revenue and/or local options in support of safe cities, including:

- Increase state funding of local public health jurisdictions, including funding to address mental health needs.
- Modify existing local option public safety sales tax authority to allow more flexible options (ie, single or multiple city use; eliminate earmark provisions).
- Provide innovative tools, such as the Housing Everyone Financing Tool, to improve housing accessibility, including affordable and workforce housing.
- Provide ongoing funding for the Housing Trust Fund.
- Authorize specific tools that can help law enforcement in urban areas manage unique levels and types of incidents involving drugs, weapons, gangs, and prostitution -- particularly prostitution operations that endanger youth.

### Other

- Extend the annexation sales tax credit commencement date beyond January 2010, retain and commit to the ten year duration, remove the population threshold, and modify the restriction on which cities can utilize the credit, recognizing the State will need to apply limits on the use based on revenue availability.
- Maintain the State's commitment to provide SST mitigation for negatively affected jurisdictions.



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## **2009 City of Tacoma Federal Policy Priorities**

### **Community Development Block Grant**

The City supports continuation and enhancement of the Community Development Block Grant program. As this important program has been reduced by over 50 percent in the last decade, the City supports increases in the program to cover increasing costs of services. At a minimum, the program should not drop below FY 08 levels. The City uses CDBG funds to meet the most basic needs in the community, utilizing non-government agencies wherever possible. The CDBG program is well understood in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City opposes relocating the program away from HUD.

### **Law Enforcement Funds**

The City supports continuation and enhancement of Federal programs that have assisted local law enforcement efforts. Local Law Enforcement Block Grants, Byrne Grants and the COPS Program have all been used to pay for additional police officers, special emphasis programs and emerging community safety needs. These programs have been substantially reduced in recent years. These reductions come just as communities across the nation have seen an increase in gang activity and violent crime.

### **Housing**

The economic crisis the nation faces began in the housing market. To date, little of the effort to address the crisis has gone to those at the "front line": mortgage holders in danger of foreclosure. The City appreciates the funds provided by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act in 2008, but that program only assists a tiny fraction of those in distress. The fate of thousands of homeowners holding problematic mortgages is a community issue because as more and more houses become vacant and blighted, they attract crime and send healthy neighborhoods into a downward spiral. The City supports more aggressive Federal legislation to allow bankruptcy courts and/or federal insurance programs such as FDIC to modify or otherwise protect mortgages in danger of foreclosure

### **Telecommunications**

The City opposes legislation which grants Federal authority over City rights of way, franchise authority, and taxation in the name of providing advantages for telecommunications companies to compete with cable companies. Such actions will surely lead to the cable firms wanting the same treatment and lead to uncompensated damage to City streets and loss of tax revenue used for City services, including cable services currently provided. The City does support reasonable efforts to streamline regulatory processes.

### **Energy & Environmental Block Grant**

The City supports the creation of a new direct funding program to support local efforts to address the impacts of global warming. The City has been among the leaders of the grass roots approach to this important issue. The US Conference of Mayors has developed a proposal for an Energy and Environmental Block Grant, modeled after the Community Development Block Grant program, to provide direct funding to cities for additional efforts that: improve community energy efficiency; develop and implement community strategies to reduce carbon emissions; develop and implement community and transportation energy conservation programs; encourage the development of new technologies and systems to reduce dependence on foreign oil; and develop and promote alternative and renewable energy sources.

### **Renewal Community**

The City supports continuation of empowerment zone and renewal community legislation. Tacoma is the only Western Washington community with "renewal community" designation. This allows the City to offer a variety of Federal tax credits and deductions, which has been used to by more than a dozen economic development projects retaining or creating hundreds of jobs. This authority expires in 2009. Congress is considering an extension of this legislation and the City has been working with the other communities in 39 states to extend the authority.

### **Access to Health Care**

The citizens of Tacoma have overwhelmingly expressed their support for Congress to enact legislation providing access to high quality health care for all individuals. The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other industrialized nation yet there are still 29,000 people in Tacoma, 800,000 in Washington State and more than 47 million in the United States who are uninsured, severely limiting their access to health care services. The City supports Congressional action to develop a universal health care system.