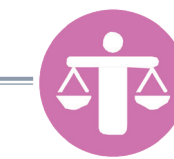
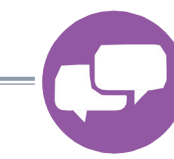




CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington Tacoma
Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs
TLAW 486: Field Work in Law & Policy
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2018 NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL PROGRAM REVIEW AND ORDINANCE UPDATE



Introduction

In 1992, The Tacoma City Council established the Neighborhood Council Program to promote citizen engagement with local government. In our project, we examined the development of the program since the last five-year review. In particular, we focused on how well the program operates with regard to bi-directional representation: how effectively the neighborhood councils represent their stakeholders, as well as how responsive the city is to the neighborhood council as the representatives of their communities. We also offer recommendations to the City and Neighborhood Councils to identify potential areas of opportunity.



A Tacoma Police liaison takes questions and addresses recent concerns of the South Tacoma residents.

Photo Credit: Amora Lenzi

Methods & Approach

In our research, we conducted interviews with Neighborhood Council board members, City staff, County staff, and faculty members at potential partner institutions, including University of Washington Tacoma and Tacoma Public Schools. Student researchers attended neighborhood council meetings and conducted literature reviews, precedent studies, and comparative research on programs in proximate and similar jurisdictions. Additionally, we examined comprehensive and other plans released by the City and other institutions, as well as the Tacoma 2018 Community Survey and recent demographics from the Pierce County Auditor.



Washington State Representative Laurie Jenkins discusses property tax concerns with West End residents.

Photo Credit: Amora Lenzi

Initial Findings

Our research investigates and makes suggestions surrounding fundamental elements of the Neighborhood Council program. We also envision potential programs that could enrich the connection between the City and its Neighborhood Councils. Some of our initial findings and recommendations include:

- **Non-partisan voter literacy information** in multiple languages.
- **Examination of ways to build capacity** and grow membership within each Neighborhood Council.
- **Suggestions on the division of City funds** among Councils to contribute to better equity.
- **Developing avenues for voluntary associations**, including the Neighborhood Council Program, to better interact with the City.
- The **creation of a Youth Ambassador Program** to engage high school students.

- A **City-run volunteer program** that coordinates a long-term partnership with anchor institutions, starting with UW Tacoma.
- An **annual volunteer celebration** that brings together community members to celebrate the spirit of service in an artistic and cultural way, encouraging more long-term engagement.
- **Incorporating community development efforts into Neighborhood Council meetings** to increase participation and positive engagement.