



## CITY OF TACOMA

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# BUSINESS RECRUITMENT: A MILLENNIAL PERSPECTIVE



## Introduction

This project, sponsored by staff in Community and Economic Development (CEDD), sought to uncover millennial perspectives and help shape strategies for attracting and keeping millennials in Tacoma.

As the baby boomer generation retires, millennials (individuals aged 18 to 35) have become a critical component of sustainable economies in communities across the country. Therefore, like many cities in the U.S., Tacoma is seeking new ways to secure millennials' place in the city's growth.

The overarching research question driving this report is: *How does Tacoma attract and keep millennials in its city?* And, more specifically, what amenities or retail destinations are missing in downtown Tacoma that would attract millennials?

Tacoma must consider the critical roles that housing affordability and job opportunities play in millennial recruitment and retention.

## Methods

To answer these questions, the researchers conducted two semi-structured focus groups composed of young professionals and college students between the ages of 18 and 34. Next, the researchers used a **Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) Framework**, a model that considers financial, social, environmental, and cultural bottom lines as critical components to community economic development (Herranz Jr., 2016).

To further distill focus group responses, researchers used a QBL lens and to identify the following major themes:

- Cultural vibrancy and engagement
- Diversity
- Convenience
- Marketing improvement

## Recommendations

Drawing upon the focus group themes, researchers developed three specific recommendations that the City of Tacoma could use to support millennial engagement and retention:

- Food trucks
- Urban supermarkets
- Lounges

In addition to their connection with the study's research findings, these recommendations align closely with the QBL criteria and have potential for short-term implementation. Finally, report findings indicate that selective advertising and effective marketing will also be critical for millennial attraction and retention for downtown Tacoma.

These themes were evident across many participant responses and emerged as a unifying thread running through each of the four bottom lines, setting context for the study's recommendations.



The Apothecary Bar at Brent's Drugs offers a community gathering space in addition to serving as a bar.

Photo Credit: Apothecary social media promotion.



Bustling, engaging, family-friendly space at the shared Guru Donuts/Boise Fry Company location in downtown Boise.

Photo Credit: Boise Fry Co., AACInglot Moran, Guru Donuts, LLC, 2017