



Latasha Palmer Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Tacoma City Council, Position 6

What are your top three priorities to achieve in your term?

Housing- I will address homelessness and housing insecurity through humane strategies that meet people where they are. This includes expanding community land trusts, preserving existing affordable housing, and creating options so people of all incomes can live where they work. My focus is on permanent affordability, reducing displacement, and ensuring those most impacted help shape solutions. Personal Security- I will advance evidence-based, community-led public safety through neighborhood watch programs, community-engaged policing, and violence prevention partnerships. I support alternative response models for situations where police are unnecessary, strengthening Neighborhood Councils, creating a police accountability office, and empowering community oversight, initiatives I began on the 2024 Charter Review Committee. Economic and Climate- I will support small businesses, promote cooperatives, protect unions, and back fair-wage policies like the People's Bill of Rights. City efforts must include diverse input, especially from the Puyallup Tribe and historically disenfranchised groups. We must challenge polluting projects and act on environmental research. I will push to strengthen accountability measures, including improving the weak Climate and Sustainability ordinance, to ensure measurable progress toward net-zero greenhouse emissions.

How will you boost housing options, particularly for families of all incomes to live where they work? How will you engage the public for new shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing, permanent supportive housing? How do you weigh community objections with the housing goals for your jurisdiction, while encouraging engagement from neighbors?

As co-founder of Aya Community Land Trust, I focus on reducing homelessness and creating permanently affordable housing to prevent displacement and promote long-term stability. We must



replace siloed approaches with coordinated, community-driven plans that meet people where they are. This means expanding mixed-income developments, preserving affordable units, investing in community land trusts, and building social housing that remains public for generations. I am a strong advocate for 15-minute cities, which cut transportation costs and emissions while improving accessibility.

For shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing, and permanent supportive housing, I prioritize transparency, timely communication, and early engagement. I would bring providers, those working directly with the unhoused, and unhoused residents themselves into neighborhood-based discussions alongside community members. Sharing clear data, showing examples of success, and addressing legitimate concerns helps reduce fear and misinformation.

When objections arise, I listen and separate fear-based narratives from solvable challenges. I will use the listening and research skills I honed during my Charter Review work to find consensus while holding the line on urgency and scale. Stable housing is foundational to health, safety, and economic security, and with conscious design, we can respect the planet, reflect neighborhood voices, and meet our housing goals.

Do you support adding progressive revenue sources? Which ones would you support to fund your priorities? Or what cuts would you make to balance budgets facing increasing strain under Trump?

Yes, I support adding progressive revenue sources so the wealthiest individuals and largest corporations contribute their fair share to Tacoma's health and stability. To fund priorities like housing security, public safety alternatives, small business support, and climate resilience, I would explore a city-level capital gains tax, an excise tax on excessive CEO-to-worker pay ratios, stronger developer impact fees, and a JumpStart-style payroll tax targeting only large companies with high-earning employees.



Some argue Tacoma lacks the wealthy tax base to make this happen, but I see wealth inequality daily. While we may not match Seattle's scale, there are opportunities. We can get creative by taxing owners of blighted properties and pursuing other locally tailored options. We must explore all revenue avenues instead of defaulting to austerity measures that harm working people.

Community is also an untapped resource. Even with federal budget cuts, the City can foster resilience by supporting mutual aid, urban gardening, cooperative childcare, youth mentorship, and other grassroots solutions that strengthen neighborhoods.

If cuts are unavoidable, I would target ineffective programs, end unproductive corporate subsidies, and shift funds from over-policing to root-cause solutions in housing, economic stability, and environmental health, avoiding short-term cuts that drive long-term costs.

What do you think is the most important strategy your jurisdiction can pursue to limit cost increases and make the region affordable to live in? How would you go about implementing that strategy?

The most important strategy Tacoma can pursue to keep our region affordable is to rebuild public trust through transparent, accountable, and collaborative governance. Many residents believe City resources are mismanaged or directed toward backroom deals that benefit wealthy networks over people and planet. The recent rejection of a safe streets initiative was not about opposing investment in safety or infrastructure; it was a message that people feel they are already paying for these services without seeing results.

To change that, we must open our processes, revisit the budget to ensure funds go where they are most needed, and pass ordinances that punish exploitative practices. My approach is to co-create and co-monitor solutions to our biggest challenges, such as housing, safety, infrastructure, and fair wage jobs, directly with the community. This means making budget and performance data



accessible, setting measurable benchmarks the public can track in real time, and ensuring communities most impacted are at the table shaping priorities and holding leaders accountable.

When residents can see where their money goes, measure outcomes, and participate in decisions, we can focus resources where they have the greatest impact and address the root causes of rising costs with solutions the community truly owns.

Traffic deaths are rising across Washington state, with pedestrians composing an increasing share statewide. What is your approach to making our streets safer for all users?

My approach to making streets safer starts with using existing data and acting on it. Pierce County's recent traffic safety study must be put into action, not left on a shelf. We need to identify the most dangerous corridors, analyze crash patterns, and implement targeted solutions to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. I am an advocate for creating less car-dependent cities by expanding safe, reliable, and accessible alternatives to driving, including protected bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly design, and robust public transit. While there has been pushback on lowering parking requirements, we can ease resistance by engaging the community, educating on the benefits, and ensuring infrastructure supports alternative transportation. Proven safety strategies include lowering speeds in high-risk areas, improving crosswalk visibility and lighting, expanding protected bike and pedestrian networks, and designing streets that naturally calm traffic. I will work closely with neighborhood councils, disability advocates, and community organizations to ensure measures meet the needs of all users, especially the most vulnerable. By pairing the findings of the Pierce County study with community input, we can create safer, more accessible streets rooted in both evidence and lived experience, focusing on prevention rather than reacting after tragedies occur.

What is your approach to improving public safety over the next five years? How will you actualize it?



My approach to public safety focuses on evidence-based, community-led solutions that address the root causes of harm. Safety is not just about policing; it is about ensuring housing security, access to mental and behavioral health care, living wage jobs, youth opportunities, freedom from fear of deportation, and a sense of belonging. When people can meet their basic needs, they are less likely to be in situations that lead to harm. Empowering the community is key. I will strengthen Tacoma's Neighborhood Councils to be active partners in setting safety priorities and holding the City accountable. I will support community-driven programs such as violence interruption, youth mentorship, neighborhood watch, and mutual aid networks, and expand alternative response models for situations where police are not necessary, such as mental health crises and welfare checks. To actualize this vision, I will build strong City, organizational, and neighborhood alliances, invest in prevention and intervention, and ensure measurable accountability. As a member of the 2024 Charter Review Committee, I proposed a police accountability office and an empowered community oversight commission, and I will continue to push for those reforms. By addressing root causes and empowering communities, we can build a proactive public safety system that serves all Tacoma residents.

City Council

Do you support camping bans or sweeps? If elected, how would you adapt or change current law/policies to protect and support our neighbors?

Encampment sweeps do not solve homelessness; they displace people, destabilize lives, and waste resources without addressing root causes like lack of affordable housing, economic instability, and underfunded mental health services. Sweeps often result in the loss of IDs, medication, and other essentials, making it harder to access services and housing, while pushing people into hiding and greater vulnerability.

I recognize public safety concerns, having seen dangerous activity near the Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center. However, many unhoused individuals did not become homeless in Tacoma, and other cities shifting their populations here must share responsibility.



Public health has historically been used to justify discrimination against marginalized communities, and anti-homeless laws continue to target people of color disproportionately. Sweeps frame homelessness as a sanitation issue while ignoring real solutions.

I would oppose clearing encampments unless adequate shelter is available, with options for families, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, people with disabilities, and those with pets or partners. I support safe parking areas, tiny home villages, sanctioned encampments with services, and non-congregate shelters. Policies must safeguard belongings, expand outreach and mental health services, and use crisis response teams for safety concerns. Resources should be redirected from criminalization to permanent supportive housing, rental assistance, and eviction prevention.

In what ways could your city's comprehensive plan go further, and what would you push for to improve it during your tenure?

Actually, Tacoma did a great job on our recent One Tacoma comprehensive plan, especially in public outreach and incorporating community suggestions like adding social housing and community land trusts to our long-term vision. It shows that when residents are engaged, they bring forward innovative, equitable solutions that strengthen our city.

The area of opportunity is not in the plan itself, but in implementation. Tacoma has a pattern of producing plan after plan and study after study without a clear, accountable path to putting recommendations into action, and doing so successfully. During my tenure, I will push for detailed implementation roadmaps for every major plan, with timelines, measurable goals, and clear responsibilities assigned to specific departments or partners. I will also advocate for regular public progress reports so residents can track what's been done, what's still pending, and why.



Our plans should not be aspirational documents that sit on a shelf. They should be living guides, co-monitored with the community, that lead to tangible, measurable improvements in people's lives.