

## Observer Corps Report

Meeting: Tacoma City Council Study Session

Date: May 21, 2019

Council Members Present: Woodards (Mayor) Mello, Thoms, McCarthy, Blocker, Ushka, Hunter

Observer: Ann Williams

There were two major task force products that were presented at this meeting. The first was the Harvard Bloomberg Innovation Project Update and the second the Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) Taskforce Recommendations and Report.

Last year Mayor Woodards was selected to participate in the Harvard Bloomberg Project, whose mission is the equipping of mayors to lead high performing cities. The program has four tracks that allow participants to practice the concepts taught in the program. The HB method involves in depth interviews with stakeholders, looking for common themes, then designing testable prototypes before roll-out of initiatives to address the problem.

The mayor and city manager chose the Innovation track and designed a project around public safety, as a recent survey of residents revealed the fact that black residents were three times more likely than white residents to feel unsafe in the city. So far multiple in-depth interviews have been completed. A common theme identified is that the national narrative and events (Ferguson, for example) influence the perception of safety. The team is now designing a prototype intervention that would engage the community in conversation at the time of a national event about how such an event might have been handled differently in Tacoma. There was some discussion about the interaction between this project and Project Peace, which was started in Tacoma in 2015 and is ongoing. There was not felt to be any conflict between the two.

The second item was the final report of the CWA task force. A CWA is a project labor agreement negotiated between the project owner (city government in this case) and unions, before the issuance of project bids, incorporating community benefits and labor requirements and applicable to all projects within a defined scope. This task force was created in October 2018. Its charge was to explore the feasibility of creating a CWA for public building projects in Tacoma. The goal, which was strongly supported by the task force members, was to improve training and employment opportunities for members of disadvantaged neighborhoods and to enhance the ability of women and minority owned businesses to participate in such projects. After studying and reviewing CWA's in other jurisdictions, a draft CWA for Tacoma and the experience of an agency (Tacoma Housing Authority) pursuing similar goals without a CWA, the task force has concluded that a CWA was not workable and that the goals were better pursued through ordinance and policy measures. The Council expressed a commitment to continue to pursue its goals.