

TO: Tacoma City Council
Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, 12th Floor
Tacoma, WA 98402
Delivered by email to cityclerk@cityoftacoma.org

RE: Tacoma Climate Action Plan Letter of Support

To the Honorable Mayor Woodards, Deputy Mayor Blocker, and City Councilmembers,

I'm writing in support of Tacoma City Council's adoption and full funding of the draft Climate Action Plan. This Plan can help deliver healthy, affordable housing; clean, reliable transportation; protections for public health; and green, good-paying jobs for Tacoma. These are things our community has needed and asked for – for years.

Thank you for recognizing the problem – and the opportunity – and declaring a [climate emergency](#) in 2019. Now, we have a clear plan for action. It's time to invest in a climate-safe future. As a policy and advocacy non-profit organization dedicated to transportation access across Washington State, *Transportation Choices Coalition* is particularly interested in mobility and land use actions that affect living, working, and recreating in Tacoma and the benefits Tacoma's leadership on transportation can bring to the wider region. **We are also invested in ensuring this work is done equitably; overburdened and frontline communities in Tacoma must be prioritized in these efforts.**

Transportation Choices Coalition envisions equity focused, affordable, walkable, bike-friendly, vibrant communities connected by great transit in Tacoma and across the state. The draft Climate Action Plan's focus on frequent, reliable, low carbon transit; safe and connected biking, walking, and rolling routes; and transit-oriented development for complete neighborhoods will make Tacoma a safer, healthier, more accessible place to live.

Tacoma's largely single-occupancy vehicle transportation system is responsible for 40% of our community's climate change causing greenhouse gas emissions. The City of Tacoma must both lead by example with bold climate investments through 2024 as well as leverage and support outside partnerships to transform our transportation system. Through regional collaboration with Pierce Transit, Sound Transit and local support for alternative transportation advocates, we can deliver transportation solutions for a better, climate-safe Tacoma. We must also support our most vulnerable community members and organizations that serve them to be ready for climate impacts we are already experiencing – and expect to worsen.

We want to call attention to specific investments the City should make, including the following CAP Actions:

- 1. Prioritize engaging frontline communities in climate work
- 9: Build a complete, citywide network of sidewalks, safe and ADA-accessible intersections, bike connections and Safe Routes to School improvements by 2050.
- 11: Increase partnerships and funding for active transportation and public transit programs and events that reduce barriers to using these modes and encourage their use.

- 12: Update street design guidelines and processes to make walking, biking, rolling, and riding transit easy and safe.
- 17: Incentivize green buildings, land use density, and mixed-use development with affordable housing near transit.
- 19: Support Pierce Transit in developing a zero emission public transit plan.
- 20: Incentivize active transportation, transit, car sharing, and electric vehicles, and reduce parking minimums in new developments.

Tacoma City Council should follow [Mayor Woodards' leadership](#) in calling for a transformational “pace and scale of change needed to do our part in preventing the most catastrophic impacts of climate change.” According to a recent United Nations report, 2021 is a “[make-or-break year](#)” to make bold climate action investments to avoid [irreversible, catastrophic climate change](#). Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic recession, recent wildfire smoke, and extreme heat events compound our community’s need for immediate climate resilience investments.

With this in mind, we need a Climate Action Plan that ensures accountability and promotes cross-sector collaboration to improve street design, support transit electrification, and dedicate resources to community education, outreach, and leadership. This means fully funding the 46 near-term actions of the CAP through the 2021-2022 Mid-biennium budget adjustment, Covid-19 Recovery funding, the 2023-2024 biennium budget, and additional grants. These actions will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but improve access to affordable housing, public transportation, jobs and business opportunities, community health, and more.

Climate touches so much of our community and its social equity, environmental, and economic priorities. We are hopeful to see the City make necessary investments for a better Tacoma and a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew J. Sutherland', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew J. Sutherland

Advocacy Director, Transportation Choices Coalition