

## Minutes

### City of Tacoma Equity in Contracting Advisory Committee

Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Time: 7:30am – 9:30am

Location: Tacoma Municipal Building, Room 243, 747 Market Street, Tacoma Washington 98402

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#### Zoom Information

Dial: 253-215-8782

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/93921755135?pwd=UHB1Ym00dGJWZmtLeUE3cHBNWDFKdz09>

Webinar ID: 939 2175 5135

Passcode: 959442

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Scott Lundt called the meeting to order at 7:35AM

#### II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

City Staff Malika Godo provided the Statement of Purpose to note the purpose of the meeting.

#### III. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

City Staff Linda Cerna stated the Land Acknowledgement.

#### IV. ROLL CALL – EIC Advisory Committee

**Present:** Certified Business 2 - Angela Michaelis; Certified Business 4 - Scott Lundt; Council District 2 - Thomas Ebenhoh; Council District 3 – Kate Ginn; Council District 5: Christopher Brown; Large Prime – Clint Myers; TPU Service Area 1 – Sushil Nihal; TPU Service Area 2 – Michael Jordan

**Absent (excused):** Certified Business No. 1- Catina Patton; Union Signatory Firm – Justin Baker

**Absent (unexcused):** Certified Business 3 - Rahsaan Freeman; TPU Service Area 3 – Khadi Berete

#### V. Consent Agenda & Minutes

Approval of August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes & November 19, 2025 Agenda

- a. Motion to approve the minutes & Agenda made by Committee Member Kate Ginn seconded by Committee Member Thomas Ebenhoh
- b. No added comments or discussion
- c. Motion passes and the August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes and November 19, 2025 Agenda are approved

#### VI. City Staff Updates – City Staff

- a. **Welcome and new members introduction:** EIC new Committee Members Christopher Brown, Thomas Ebenhoh and Sushil Nihal introduced themselves to the group.  
Current members introduced themselves to the new members.
- b. **Committee Member Required Training**  
EIC Advisory Members were advised to complete their training by visiting <https://www.atg.wa.gov/open-government-training>
- c. **2026-2027 Project Forecasting List Updates**  
Information has been gathered from all City departments. The final project forecasting list will be sent upon completion. Projects are currently totaling at \$229 Million. The information will be put on the City website.
- d. **Outreach Plan Updates**  
EIC had a very strong outreach year, marked by increased workshop participation.  
The Access to Capital workshop will be offered bi-annually, based on audience demand. In addition, the OMWBE certification workshop will continue to be delivered quarterly in 2026, consistent with our 2025 schedule.

We plan to deliver a cybersecurity workshop in the first quarter of 2026 and are currently in discussions to offer an additional financial institution–led access to capital workshop.

The Grit City Connect event is scheduled for May 2026, with the date and location to be finalized. We are also developing a collaboration with Sound Transit, anticipated to take place in the second quarter of 2026. Finally, in Q3 2026, we will participate in the Regional Contracting Forum. Our finalized workshop schedule will be available at the next EIC Advisory Committee in February.

**e. Progress on Disparity Study Recommendations**

The 2024 Disparity Study was commissioned to assess whether minority and women owned businesses face disparities in the city of Tacoma contracting, evaluate the effectiveness of current policies, provide data to inform future policy and program decisions and finally, and build a foundation for more inclusive economic development.

- The study found that disparities persist, and minority and women owned businesses face ongoing barriers in city contracting. Even though the EIC program improved outcomes compared to the SBE Program, gaps remain. There are substantial disparities in construction, professional services, goods and other service contracts.
- The study offered several recommendations, including strengthen outreach and engagement with MWBEs, improve data collection, tracking, and transparency, revise procurement policies to reduce systemic barriers and finally, increase internal accountability and staff training.
- Additionally, the study recommended the city perform additional outreach and relationship building, participate in MBE/WBE/SBE capacity building, consider other steps to encourage small business utilization and allocate sufficient resources for program success.
- In 2025, we have expanded vendor forums and networking events, partnered with community-based organizations for outreach, built long-term relationships with diverse businesses and have aligned with Tacoma Anchor Network agencies to scale collective impact. In terms of policy, process and data, we have updated our systems to better track the MWBE participation and we have connected with internal teams to align efforts and share insights on shared prime contractors.
- Looking ahead to 2026, we are planning on institutionalizing equity through department engagement and shared accountability, strengthening compliance and performance storytelling to drive results, centering transparency and impact through annual reporting and disparity study implementation and leveraging collective leadership through the EIC Advisory Committee and Tacoma Anchor Network.
- We welcome your feedback to help the city identify business barriers to access, provide input on policy and program development, act as a bridge between the city and diverse business community and finally, support accountability and transparency in EIC Program efforts.

**f. EIC General overview and processes**

An overview of the program was presented to each new member during their orientation meeting. The latest minor updates to the EIC Regulations are currently under review by our director. Once it is approved, we will share it with the group. If there are any major changes, City Staff will bring it to the group for feedback.

**VII. Committee Discussion – City Staff and Committee Members**

**a. Federal DBE Program Changes - Updates:**

After consultation with the City of Tacoma Legal team and disparity study consultant, Keen Independent, City Staff confirmed that the EIC Program will not be impacted by the recent DBE Program changes. The EIC Program applies three requirements on City-funded projects: SBE, WBE, and MBE.

While City Staff continue to review DBE availability for participation, the EIC Program is a local program, and therefore remains in effect.

**b. What’s working and What’s not working?**

Members were asked to provide input on what they believe is working well within the program and where improvements may be needed. As an example, EIC staff shared plans to conduct onsite visits in 2026 and requested member feedback on this approach.

Regarding onsite visits, EIC Advisory Committee members raised several questions and provided the following input:

- Kate Ginn asked what EIC staff would be looking for during onsite visits. EIC staff responded that the purpose of the visits would be to ensure compliance and increase accountability across all parties.
- Tom Ebenhoh asked whether contractors would be notified in advance of an onsite visit. EIC staff responded that visits would not be announced.
- Sushil Nihal noted that the City should also be held accountable to ensure compliance and emphasized the importance of having the appropriate level of expertise during onsite visits. He suggested including a project inspector during onsite interviews and highlighted the need for checks and balances for all parties involved.
- Clint Myers stated that onsite visits are valuable but recommended conducting them during project progress meetings to avoid disrupting construction work. He noted that this approach would allow EIC staff to engage with personnel who have greater project knowledge rather than field staff carrying out assigned tasks. He added that participation in project meetings could be more productive and help build trusting relationships with contractors.

(City Staff) Malika Godo added that she will schedule an internal process meeting in January 2026 and send some information regarding onsite visit process for more input from the EIC Advisory members.

Clint Myers brought up the rule that a certified firm bidding on city funded projects does not have to utilize diverse businesses to meet other requirements. He stated that he does not support waiving requirements for certified contractors, noting that doing so could undermine the integrity of the program. Angela Michaelis agreed that this rule defeats the purpose of the program.

- On this topic, Michael Jordan disagreed with the feedback on this topic. He added that there are not a lot of minority owned contractors leading projects at the city of Tacoma. The path to get to that point is part of equity. Therefore, they should have the right to self-certify and be granted exceptions.
- Clint Myers responded that he knows the contractor very well and he feels like because they’re successful they should try to help other diverse businesses as well and be fair to the program.
- Michael Jordan responded that given the small percentage of projects led by minority businesses, we should focus on the other projects that are led by non-minority contractors.

The group agreed to continue this discussion at the next internal process Subcommittee to further discuss the impacts of these changes and provide feedback to the city.

**a. Annual work plan review and meeting planning**

Chair Scott Lundt transitioned the discussion to the annual work plan review, noting that the EIC Advisory Committee should retain its three subcommittees, including the Workforce Subcommittee, which has been inactive. Michael Jordan, Tom Ebenhoh, Angela Michaelis, Clint Myers, and Scott Lundt volunteered to join the Workforce Subcommittee.

- The first topic for the subcommittee will focus on the “self-certified bidder” provision of the program. Chair Scott Lundt reminded the group that the purpose of the Workforce Subcommittee is to advise on

strategies for incorporating inclusion and diversity into existing or future hiring, recruitment, education, and advancement efforts within the contracting community.

Christopher Brown also noted his interest in having the City begin tracking dollars spent with LGBTQ-owned businesses to help inform future policy decisions.

## **VIII. Future Meetings – A special meeting can be scheduled if needed**

### **2026 Regular Meetings**

- i. February 18, 2026
- ii. May 20, 2026
- iii. August 19, 2026
- iv. November 18, 2026

### **Public Comment**

- No public comment was received in writing, and no one attending online requested to speak for public comment.

### **Action items:**

- Malika to check with purchasing if the City has been tracking the Veteran & LGBTQ Spend
- Schedule the first workforce subcommittee meeting
- Schedule the next internal process subcommittee
- Invite the City's Office of Strategy to come and share on the Tacoma Anchor Network
- Send Project Forecasting List via email to the EIC Advisory Committee Members
- Send EIC Disparity Study Recommendations presentation to the EIC Advisory Committee Members
- Send latest updates to the EIC Regulations if approved by CED Director.

### **Adjournment**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:05 AM**

Minutes taken by City of Tacoma