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THE COMMUNITY

Located at the foot of Mount Rainier and along the shores of Commencement Bay in Washington State, Tacoma is recognized as a livable and progressive international city. The city that incorporated in 1884 has grown from its historical roots as a bustling port that exported goods around the world to a center for international exports, the arts and healthy, affordable living.

The City of Tacoma is an international, culturally diverse community. Unique neighborhoods and housing options provide value in the fast-growing Seattle-Tacoma Metropolitan area. Housing options include downtown and waterfront condominiums and apartments, historic mansions, craftsman bungalows in walkable urban neighborhoods and suburban view homes.

With a backdrop of Mt. Rainier, the Cascade Mountain Range and Puget Sound, residents enjoy the Northwest’s pristine environment and natural recreational opportunities. Parks are abundant and managed by the award-winning MetroParks Tacoma Point Defiance Park, the second largest urban park in the nation, houses a zoo and aquarium, the historic Fort Nisqually, Owens Beach, Japanese and rose gardens, as well as wildlife and hiking trails.

The City is served by excellent public and private educational facilities, including the University of Washington Tacoma, Evergreen State College, two private universities, three community/technical colleges, and numerous trade and business schools. Only 27 miles from Seattle, Tacoma is close enough to enjoy all the advantages of a major metropolitan area nearby.

THE TACOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

In 1874, a small village on the shore of Commencement Bay incorporated as the City of Tacoma and appointed its first town marshal. Since then, we have grown to serve nearly 220,000 residents as an agency committed to community-oriented policing, relationship-building, and reducing crime through effective partnerships.

The Tacoma Police Department is represented by commissioned officers, limited commission officers (animal control), and civilian employees. As an accredited police department through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), we are committed to providing the citizens of Tacoma with the highest level of police service. We do this by meeting nationally set standards of police excellence through model policies, procedures, and practices. Over the years, we have built strong working relationships with the community city departments, various agencies, and businesses through a commitment to community-oriented policing. These relationships have allowed us to build collaborative partnerships to help us reduce crime and crime-related activity in our neighborhoods and business districts, so our citizens feel safe and secure where they live, work, and visit in Tacoma.

Our mission is to create a safe and secure environment in which to live, work, and visit by working together with the community, enforcing the law in a fair and impartial manner, preserving the peace and order in our neighborhoods, and safeguarding our Constitutional guarantees.

THE POSITION

The City of Tacoma is seeking an experienced, transformational leader to serve as its next Police Chief for the Tacoma Police Department (TPD). The Police Chief is the executive officer responsible for the oversight and administrative management of the department’s daily operations and for achieving the department’s mission, vision, and strategic objectives in alignment with the vision, goals, and priorities of the City Council and community.

The individual in this role will be expected to promote a robust culture of inclusivity and service orientation among TPD’s commissioned and civilian staff, develop strong, trusting, and collaborative relationships within the Tacoma community, particularly in the black, indigenous, and other persons of color communities; cultivate partnerships with other regional public safety agencies; and work closely with the City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and other City executives to ensure equitable and outstanding service to the community we serve.

The Police Chief’s first priority will be to join the City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and other City executives in leading Transforming Tacoma – a City initiative and commitment to engage in comprehensive change, beginning with policing, that will fundamentally enhance and radically reimagine the way we operate and the way we serve the residents of this great city. The Chief will be expected to take a strong and visible lead in transforming the policies and practices of the police department to meet the anti-racist goals and outcomes outlined in City Council Resolution 40622.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The new Police Chief will be expected to have a command presence inside and outside of the organization and be able to lead by example. He or she should also be very approachable and responsive, especially in the community. The ideal candidate will be an engaged leader that is comfortable dealing with controversial matters in the public. Transformative leaders that look for ways to divert certain calls away from Police officers to non-law enforcement entities are encouraged to apply.

The successful candidate will also possess:

Senior management experience: Previous experience in senior public safety management in a complex city or organization, strong understanding of performance management for all levels of the organization, skilled at increasing policing effectiveness, including data-driven and modern problem-solving practices, fiscally responsible, with a thorough understanding of budgeting in a police department. A history of making significant improvements in a police agency.

A history of effective community engagement and collaboration: Experience using strategies that promote trust, reflect community values, and enhance public safety such as community policing. A proven ability to partner with community groups (to include those historically underrepresented), businesses and nonprofits, to collaboratively address public safety needs. A demonstrated commitment to transparency and accountability.

Proven ability to develop and implement evidence-based strategies to increase public safety: Breadth of knowledge of modern police strategies, policies, training, and technologies: A history of two decades of experience, engaging in comprehensive change, beginning with policing, that will fundamentally enhance and radically reimagine the communities such as children and youth, undocumented residents, unhoused residents, victims of domestic violence, LGBTQ residents, the elderly, and other groups at high risk of criminal victimization.

Strong communications, speaking, and listening skills: Proven ability to communicate with the public and with police department employees. Substantial experience as a public speaker. Ability to share the vision of a future that attracts and inspires police department employees and engenders a sense of hope and perceptions of safety in the broader community.

A record of productive employee relations: The ability to work well with a unionized workforce and create a fair culture that values officer and civilian input. Having the ability to positively interface with employees, explaining the basis of decisions, recognizing the importance of procedural justice within the police organization; a history of listening to employees and crafting a vision that inspires actions consistent with the vision and values of the department and City.

A demonstrated commitment to officer well-being: The ability to promote and support professional development as well as wellness and safety at all levels of the police department. A history of promoting diverse candidates and creating and maintaining a fair and respectful workplace that values diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization.

An understanding of diversity that encompasses race, gender, language, sexual orientation, religion, life experience, and other cultural backgrounds.

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A track record of working creatively and collaboratively to address the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations: Ability to address the concerns and needs of the black, indigenous, and other people of color communities; vulnerable communities such as children and youth, undocumented residents, unhoused residents, victims of domestic violence, LGBTQ residents, the elderly, and other groups at high risk of criminal victimization.

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