



City of Tacoma
WASHINGTON

Council Member Diaz Prioritizes Small and Micro-businesses

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Hi Tacoma,

Despite the daily onslaught of uncertainty coming from the federal government over the last 3 weeks, I am hopeful for our city and excited to share some of the successes from our last year with you. From day one, my focus on council has been supporting small and micro neighborhood business across our City. It's exciting to see how work as a City Council Member builds over years to have cumulative impacts.

One thing you may hear about in the news is how the biggest thing the City is tackling right now is managing our ongoing structural budget. One of the hardest things we have tackled so far in my time on council is determining how to make cuts to programs that serve our community. This is important work, but that doesn't mean we're going to let up on how we're supporting businesses and critical services. I'm proud to see how our city has been creative and pursued different solutions, including grants, to expand the reach of our programs.

Thank you,
Olgy Diaz
At-Large Tacoma Council Member

Topics in this newsletter include:

- [Expanding Home Business Opportunities](#)
- [Grease interceptor education ordinance](#)
- [\\$4 Million State Grant to Support Business and Community Reinvestment in Tacoma](#)
- [Great to see everyone at my coffee chat!](#)

Expanding Home Business Opportunities



Tacoma's economy is built on our small and microbusinesses. However, rising rent costs are pricing our smallest businesses out of the market. Microbusinesses face distinct challenges. Home businesses can be a safe testing ground for ideas in order to create an on-ramp for microbusinesses. In 2023, I sponsored a resolution directing the Planning Commission to review our home occupation standards and provide a recommendation as to how we can expand in-home options for micro-businesses.

This work was built into Home In Tacoma and serves multiple purposes within the Home In Tacoma project. I'm proud to vote to:

- Support entrepreneurship by providing residents with an opportunity to use their homes to engage in small scale business activities.
- Reduce traffic congestion and work-related commute trips by providing opportunities for residents to work in their homes.
- Protect neighborhood character by providing standards that ensure residential businesses are a secondary use and do not significantly alter the exterior of the property or affect the residential character of the neighborhood.

This will allow people to work, shop, and connect closer to their own homes. We will have whole, vibrant, engaged neighborhoods that make Tacoma the best place possible to live. The new zoning regulations took effect on February 1, 2025. See the final Home In Tacoma details at:

www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma

Grease interceptor education ordinance

The Tacoma City Council adopted Ordinance 29015 to help food and beverage businesses navigate grease interceptor requirements, promoting economic growth, and fostering a more equitable business environment in Tacoma. The ordinance requires people involved in commercial real estate transactions of food and beverage businesses, such as registered real estate brokers and property managers, in Tacoma to share an educational flyer produced by the City of Tacoma about grease interceptors with potential tenants or buyers. This approach helps ensure entrepreneurs are aware of potential infrastructure requirements before signing a lease or purchasing a property.

I have always prioritized the growth of small and micro-businesses here in Tacoma and believe that, by providing clear and upfront information about grease interceptors, we can help prevent costly surprises and delays, allowing entrepreneurs to focus on what they do best – making our community shine. This ordinance is one step we can take as a City Council because, ultimately, we all want to help business owners have the information they need to build a responsible business plan that works for them and thrive in Tacoma. There is more to do on this topic, and I will continue to be a champion for local restaurants.

More information on this policy can be found at on our [Fats, Oils, and Grease \(FOG\) webpage](#).



Community Reinvestment Project



Funding Opportunities for Tacoma Businesses

The Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) is a City of Tacoma initiative, funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce, to provide accessible capital to businesses and communities harmed by the historical injustices of the war on drugs. With \$3.6 million in funding, the CRP offers loans and grants to support economic growth, create jobs, and address systemic barriers faced by Tacoma-based businesses.

Need help applying?
Free technical assistance available including: one-on-one guidance, group workshops, and help preparing your application and required documents.

For Information and Application Visit: [MakeltTacoma.com](https://www.makelttacoma.com)

Funding Categories

- **Uplift Loan Program:** Up to \$100,000 in no-collateral loans for businesses and 501(c)(3) non-profits with at least 3 years of operation.
- **Accelerator Loan Program:** \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 loans for established businesses and 501(c)(3) non-profits with 5+ years of operation.
- **Commercial Rent Grant:** Covers up to 50% of one year's rent, up to \$25,000, for businesses.
- **Commercial Assets Grant:** Provides up to \$25,000 for equipment, technology, or other assets to support growth for businesses

Upcoming Info Sessions:

- January 29th, 2:00-4:00 PM @ The Tacoma Little Theater
- February 6th, 4:00-6:00 PM @ The Star Center

CRPTacoma@CityofTacoma.org



Scan to register for Info Sessions

\$4 Million State Grant to Support Business and Community Reinvestment in Tacoma

It was big news for Tacoma when we received a \$4 million state grant to support business and community reinvestment in Tacoma! We're excited to share information about the Community Reinvestment Project (CRP), which offers grants and loans designed to support eligible Tacoma-based businesses achieve long-term growth and sustainability.

Applications Launched January 21st. Starting January 21st, businesses can apply for CRP grants and loans. All program details, including FAQs, are now live on our website at [MakeltTacoma.com](https://www.makelttacoma.com) to help you prepare.

CRP Application Clinics – Get One-on-One Feedback

Need help finalizing your **Community Reinvestment Project (CRP)** application? If you've already started your application and want specific feedback or have questions, sign up for a **30-minute one-on-one session** at one of our upcoming **Application Clinics**:

Saturday, February 15th | 12:00 – 4:00 PM @ Traction Space, Downtown Tacoma

Wednesday, February 19th | 3:00 – 7:00 PM @ Tacoma Urban League

During these sessions, you'll receive **personalized guidance** on your application, ensuring your responses are strong and complete before submission. **Space is limited, and an appointment is required.**

[Reserve your session here.](#)

Great to see everyone at my coffee chat!



Hearing from constituents allows me to work on the issues that will matter most to you. Thank you to the two dozen people came through to connect with me at my coffee chat in December. I had such a fun time talking to local residents and business owners, and got to celebrate our small business community! I talked with restaurant owners, retail store owners, a co-owner of a Pilates studio, nonprofit organizations. Neighborhood leaders also shared their vision for the future of South Tacoma, Pac Ave, and transit. All of your feedback informs how I will prioritize the work ahead this year.

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