



PRESS RELEASE

Tacoma Police Department
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Statement to the Community from Interim Police Chief Ake

Tacoma, Wash. – As Interim Police Chief, my first 30 days has been a reminder of the challenges and opportunities facing our community. We are in a moment that has the power to redefine policing and propel transformative work to ensure that we equitably enforce the laws passed by our elected officials and upheld by our courts with accountability and integrity.

To do that, we must redefine “community safety,” so that the term captures what it means to feel safe by every one of our residents no matter where they live or the color of their skin. We have to figure out with you, all of you, the role of police in our community.

Tacoma needs more than arrests from its police department, it needs better communication and stronger partnerships between the department and our community members, service providers, advocates and our police unions. In short, we need transparency and trust.

We know that while laws are in place to address activities that have been determined to be unlawful, we must ensure that they are equitably enforced. That does not mean that they will not be enforced. Our communities’ right to peaceful protest deserves and receives our full protection and should not be co-opted by people vandalizing public and private property. Public officials should not be threatened as a means to enact change. It also means that we have a duty to protect people who are using our streets from the threat of other drivers who are choosing to put their own and other’s safety at risk. We are committed to addressing these issues, and we will continue to do our due diligence within the law.

I took the oath to protect and serve this community. To me, that means upholding the law, understanding and exceeding the community's expectations for public safety and listening to the community I serve.

Last week the 21st Century Policing Preliminary Report was issued with 64 recommendations. I have been reviewing them, and I am ready to dig in with the community, the City Manager, the Mayor and the City Council, and with the Community's Police Advisory Committee to prioritize, and prepare for the final report, so that we can do the transformative work we have promised. I also call on the community to help us rise to the challenge of creating the best Tacoma. Together, we can make this happen.

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