

TACOMA'S GOVERNMENT

Should it be changed?



*A study of Tacoma's
council-manager form of government
and proposals to replace it
with a "strong mayor"*

A CITY CLUB of Tacoma Community Studies Report

CITY CLUB
of  **Tacoma**

June 18, 1997

CITY CLUB community studies

- **TACOMA'S 1% FOR THE ARTS PROGRAM**
Issues on financing of public art - 1985.
- **DOMESTIC DEFENSE, TACOMA'S URBAN WATERFRONT**
Goals for the city's waterfront - 1988.
- **ARSENIC AND AN OLD SMELTER, ASARCO SITE CLEANUP**
Prospects and problems of the ASARCO site - 1990.
- **VISIONS FOR ASARCO'S SITE**
Report on design proposals, a follow-up - 1994.
- **BEYOND THE BOXES, A vision for Tacoma and Pierce County**
How to use the Port's broad development powers - 1994.
- **V IS FOR VIOLENCE, S IS FOR SCHOOL, How school, family and community cope with unacceptable behavior - 1995.**
- **CROSSING THE NARROWS, A land use issue. Bridge congestion and growth and development on the Gig Harbor Peninsula - 1997.**
- **TACOMA'S GOVERNMENT, Should it be changed? Comparing the city's council-manager form with a "strong mayor" plan - 1997.**



For information about CITY CLUB membership, and club activities including its luncheon and dinner programs, roundtable discussions and community studies, contact the CITY CLUB office, 1019 Pacific Ave, Suite 1701, Tacoma WA 98402. Phone: (253) 272-9561, FAX 272-5437.

Letter of transmittal

It is our privilege as members of the Local Government Study Committee of the CITY CLUB of Tacoma to transmit to the Club's members this report, "*Tacoma's Government: Should it be Changed?*"

Our consensus answer to the title question is "No." We devoted 18 months to interviewing more than a score persons including present and past mayors, city managers, council members, and others with special knowledge or expertise. After lengthy discussion, the group voted in favor of retaining the existing council-manager form of government that has served Tacoma since 1953, rather than switch to a "strong mayor" form or some other format. Although some committee members advocated for a change, most believed that no change was needed, and those advocating for a change eventually agreed that the financial cost of change was high and the benefits uncertain and unclear.

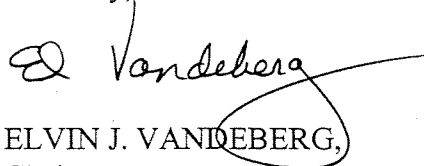
We did make a number of suggestions to strengthen the existing government on such matters as accountability, mayoral compensation, and assuring dynamic leadership of the city government to assure a continued forward movement of Tacoma toward its goals.

We extend special thanks to Beverly E. Bright and Ben Gilbert for writing, editing and formatting the report. Members of the study team:

Linda BeMiller	Ed Hudson	Doug Jackman
Dawn Lucien	Dennis Mullins	Bill Oltmann
George Pilant	Jacki Skaught	Debbie Winskill

Also contributing: Tom Stenger, Charlotte Chalker, Tom Hilyard, Wolfgang Opitz, and Joe Quaintance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elvin J. Vandenberg", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

ELVIN J. VANDEBERG,
Chair

Table of contents

Title page

List of CITY CLUB community studies

Letter of transmittal

Table of contents

I. Introduction and overview	Page 1
II. How Tacoma's government works	Page 2
III. Changing Tacoma's government - pros and cons	Page 4
IV. Recommendations and conclusions	Page 6
V. Four suggested Charter changes	Page 9
VI. Summary of conclusions	Page 10
Appendix A: Topics for further discussion	Page 11
Appendix B: List of persons interviewed	Page 12

CITY CLUB OFFICE
1019 Pacific Ave., Suite 1701
Tacoma WA 98402
phone: (253) 272-9561
Fax: (253) 272-5437

TACOMA'S GOVERNMENT

Should it be changed?

I. Introduction and overview

Questions about local government

We all want good and honest government, particularly local government.

We want efficiency, progress, safety, integrity and services.

We want long-range planning and vision.

We want growth kept under control while job opportunities increase.

We want recreational amenities and educational opportunities..

We want good and safe streets.

We want our money's worth.

Media accounts about local government activities may lead us to wonder whether these goals can be met. Many bewildered media viewers and readers may ask if government really understands citizens' needs and desires? A complex question, it gives rise to even more questions:

Does government serve the public, or are its primary customers elected and appointed officials and other public employees? Do we get needed services at an affordable cost? Does our city government, the one closest to us, operate efficiently, effectively and responsively? Would another form of local government do a better job for us? What should and can be done to attract the best and the brightest persons to elected and appointed city government positions? What are our hopes and aspirations, our visions for our city government? What problems stand in the way of achieving those visions?

To get understandable answers to the questions, particularly the ones about the performance of our local government, the CITY CLUB community studies committee decided to look into the way Tacoma's Council-Manager government functions and to find out whether another governmental form might significantly improve its operating efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness. A committee of 15 CITY CLUB members, volunteer researchers all, set out to examine and evaluate proposals to change or modify Tacoma's form of government in recognition of expressed citizen concerns about the way the present city government, as it is structured, goes about its tasks.

Focus of discussions

In order to focus its discussions, the committee addressed the following topics:

- Should the Council-Manager form of government be replaced by a Mayor-Council form?
- Should the Mayor be popularly elected in a Council-Manager form of government?

- Should the position of Mayor be considered full-time?
- Should the compensation of the Mayor be increased?
- Should the Council persons be elected at large or by districts?
- Should Council members serve full time and be provided staff?
- Should the parks, utilities, civil service system and library continue to operate by separate boards either totally or partially independent of city government?
- What form of government attracts the highest quality candidates for office?
- How and when should the City Manager be evaluated?
- Are there other issues relating to city government which need to be addressed?

It quickly became evident that widely differing points of view exist about the merits of the present form of government and proposals to change it to some other local government type, specifically the “strong mayor” form favored in many large cities. Although, group members looked to the testimony of many players and scholars for guidance on that and other issues, achieving consensus proved a challenging exercise. Some report recommendations received approval only after much discussion and close votes.

Before analyzing the arguments for change, pro and con, let’s look at the way the present government functions under the Council-Manager system.

II. How Tacoma’s government works

City Charter provisions

Tacoma’s 44-year old City Charter gives Tacoma a Council-Manager government. It delegates to its popularly-elected City Council the power and duty to appoint the City Manager who wields executive and administrative power over most of the government. Nationally and locally, it has become the most popular form of government for small and middle-sized cities.¹ While the Mayor presides at meetings of the City Council and performs ceremonial tasks as the City’s titular leader, the City Manager serves as the municipality’s executive officer and directs its departments. The study committee also examined the Mayor-Council form used in Seattle and many other larger cities. Unlike Tacoma’s Council-Manager system, the so-called “strong mayor” government mirrors the legislative-executive separation of powers at state and federal levels. Typically, the elected “strong mayor” serves as the executive and administrative head of the government with the Council exercising legislative powers.

Historically, the Council-Manager government has been favored by advocates of non-partisan government and business interests who consider the form efficient, professional, economical and less vulnerable to political pressures. Tacoma’s Council including its Mayor are elected on a non-partisan basis, although candidates’ political affiliations are often well known. The “strong mayor” or Mayor-Council government, in general, has received support from labor, career politicians and those who believe that the Mayor-Council government is more accountable. Many “strong mayor” governments permit their elected officials to run under partisan labels.

¹For cities over 10,000 population, 1,908 have the Mayor-Council form and 2,648 have the Council-Manager form. For cities over 100,000, the ratio is 83 to 106.

Special characteristics of Tacoma's government

Tacoma does not have a "pure" Council-Manager government, but one with some special characteristics including direct election of the Mayor by the voters, not the Council.² In most Council-Manager cities, all Council members are chosen by the voters with one member selected by the Council to preside. That Council member carries the title of Mayor. Although Tacoma's Mayor presides at Council meetings, he does not enjoy any more power than other Council members.

Another Tacoma variation from the Council-Manager norm is the existence of separate governmental units with independent or quasi-independent powers including some city-owned utilities, the public library and the parks. The Utility Board and Library Board are appointed by the Council, the Park Board is elected by the voters, and the Civil Service Board has members elected by the voters and members appointed by the employees and by the City Manager and Director of Utilities. Typically, the boards hire key managers, a model that resembles the Council-Manager form that controls most of Tacoma's municipal operations. The City Council may also review budgets of these agencies if their financing depends on some general city funds. Adoption of separate boards with independent powers grew out of compromises to persuade voters, especially organized labor, to endorse the 1953 change to the Council-Manager form. The direct election of the Mayor was added more recently, but the basic government has remained virtually unchanged since 1973. The School Board, of course, is also elected and has separately dedicated revenue sources, a common arrangement for cities in Washington.

While some questioned how the quality of community leadership and the existence of community problems relate to the form of government, the indirect accountability of the City Manager and a perceived lack of responsiveness to the electorate emerged as areas of concern. The City Manager reports to the City Council and accounts to it for particular actions. The Council, in turn, accounts to the voters, but Council elections do not generally revolve around the performance of the City Manager.

Who gets the brunt of pressures?

Who gets the brunt of pressures, City Manager and staff or elected Mayor and Council? That depends, not just on governmental form, but on where decisions are made. Although elected officials in all forms of government tend to be the first ones to get inquiries from constituents, under the Council-Manager form, the queries usually wind up on the desk of a City Manager staff member for reply. Under the "strong mayor" form, elected officials and their staffs, particularly the Mayor's office, are likely to have greater access to and response from key operating officials. This question then appears: would our local government function better or worse if power were shifted to elected officials and their staffs?

Today public frustration with government affects many communities, generating demands that local governments of every form become more accountable. To respond, Tacoma and many other communities have forged a kit of tools to enable voters to track what government is doing and how well. Open meeting and public disclosure laws including freedom of information rules exist in some form almost universally. Many local governments televise their sessions as Tacoma does.

As "grass roots" community leaders emerge, City Councils encounter difficulties reaching consensus on specific actions, and calls to install a politically empowered Mayor to rally the community increase. But few cities around the country have abandoned Council-Manager government in favor of a "strong mayor."

²Other Council-Manager cities in Washington which separately elect a Mayor include Olympia, Vancouver and Spokane.

Many voters expect the City Manager to respond attentively to their concerns, given the post's accountability to the elected Council. Some critics of the Council-Manager arrangement believe that City Managers tend to become isolated from political currents and unresponsive to voters who cannot hire or remove them. However, similar isolation may exist in other forms of city government where control over employee actions is restricted by civil service rules and local politics.

Having two leaders - a Mayor and a City Manager - may create tension between the two power centers, but that doesn't appear to have become a significant problem in Tacoma, the study committee found. By contrast, conflicts and political rivalries often develop between an elected Mayor and Council under classic "strong mayor" local governments. Of course, such conflicts in either form may result in airing of issues that need exposure, not necessarily a negative outcome.

III. Changing Tacoma's government - pros and cons

Argument for the "strong mayor" form

A number of City Council members including the current Mayor and a former Mayor would scrap the present setup by replacing it with a "strong mayor" or Mayor-Council form. Advocates of change suggest that a different form of government might produce a more dynamic, responsive, forward-looking administration of Tacoma. Because Tacoma is growing, it needs a strong mayor who can be more effective in initiating needed changes, it is suggested. A City Manager, they contend, tends to move cautiously to avoid offending any segment of the community, while an elected Mayor can deal more effectively with the general public and ride herd on governmental units.

As noted, Seattle has the Mayor-Council form of government, one which is frequently used for larger cities, particularly for cities over one million population. Larger jurisdictions appear to view the cost of a full-time Mayor's office and a full-time Council with staff as appropriate expenditures. The present Pierce County executive-Council form replaced a traditional County Commission form. It resembles the government of King County and has similarities to Seattle's "strong mayor" government. Pierce County has a full-time Council with a limited staff.

Case for the Council-Manager form

Every Washington State city organized during the last 20 to 25 years except one has chosen the Council-Manager form of government, according to Richard Yukubousky, director of the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. Only one city retains the Commissioner form, although it is still a common county government form, mainly among smaller counties.

In 18 months of interviews, discussions and research, a consensus emerged within the study committee that changing the form of government probably would not significantly improve the handling of many issues. A majority of the study committee felt that some proposed changes might politicize the government and add to its operating costs. While favoring retention of the existing Council-Manager form, the group endorsed a number of modifications to improve functioning of the system.

The Council can challenge a City Manager's actions and remove that official. Whether this authority is properly exercised depends on the way Council members approach their responsibilities, the city's external and internal political dynamics and the political skills of the City Manager. Some system critics argue that city managers have developed sufficient support from influential portions of

the community and the press to escape termination. Around the country, there is an almost constant movement of City Managers from place to place as attractive opportunities at higher salaries open up. Tacoma's City Manager, Ray Corpuz, took office in January, 1990. In examining these arrangements, the committee focused on operating principles, but chose not to evaluate the performance of any individual office holder nor should its comments about any office be so interpreted.

Background discussion

Some committee members noted that a number of large cities with reputations as successful municipal organizations, including San Antonio and Phoenix, operate under a Council-Manager form of government. A good working relationship between the City Manager and Council is often cited as the cornerstone of successful government in these cities. Yukubousky believes, however, that there is no right or wrong form of government, no clear winner or loser.

In 1994, proposals to change from a Council-Manager form of government to a Mayor-Council form lost in four Washington State cities. Yukubousky notes that form of city government changes are rare unless serious problems emerge. The city of Tacoma has had a Council-Manager form of government since 1953. Although there have been a number of attempts to change to a "strong mayor" government, none of them have won support at the polls. Voters have amended the Charter forty-two times in seven different elections in the past half century, but have rejected all proposals to change the basic form. The major form of government changes in Tacoma occurred in 1953, those in Pierce County about two decades ago, both taking place in the wake of headlined public scandals.

The committee found that Council members, community activists, police and fire unions were split in their support of the current form of government in Tacoma.

Appearance of a "strong mayor"

Some politicians commented that the direct election of a Mayor in Tacoma gives the appearance of a "strong" Mayor with attendant political powers, whereas the elected Mayor has no more actual power than the Council-selected Mayor in other Council-Manager cities. The Mayor and some Council members believe that they need more power and control to deliver on commitments made to voters. Others insist that the current system works quite well. Although Council members and the Mayor can exert a great measure of control over city government by mandating policies that the City Manager must carry out, that is not how the more political Council members view the job.

Leadership qualities important

Members of the study committee interviewed politicians, union leaders, academicians, agency directors and community leaders and reviewed various forms of government. Most of those interviewed, whatever governmental form they advocated, also acknowledged that it often is the leadership qualities of the individuals elected to office, not the governmental form that determines whether the government is effective.

Under Tacoma's Charter, the system presupposes that Council members will set policy and the City Manager and administrative staff, operating under instructions from that official, will put those policies into effect. Since a majority of the Council has power to dismiss the City Manager, the Council conceivably could have more clout in a Council-Manager form of government than under a "strong mayor." In practice, however, this question arises: do Councils rarely invoke this authority because their powers are too difficult to use or because of lack of necessity? Actually, most policies are adopted by Tacoma's City Council on the recommendation of the City Manager. Information upon which Council members depend most often come from the City Manager and that official's staff rather

than from other sources. Since the Council holds policy-setting authority, it can assert its prerogative and assume a larger role in policy making in Tacoma if it so chooses. The study committee does not want to suggest that the presence of the City Manager need deprive the general community of political leadership. A number of Tacoma Mayors have been effective leaders.

IV. Recommendations and conclusions

Tacoma should retain the Council-Manager form

Over the 18 months of interviews, discussions and readings, a consensus emerged within the CITY CLUB study committee that changing the form of government probably would not significantly improve the handling of many issues. The study committee concluded that the Council-Manager form of government, where Council members serve part-time and employ a professional City Manager, is the least expensive and most efficient form of government for small and middle-sized communities including Tacoma. Some members believe that the Council-Manager form also curbs political influence and assures development of a long-term, professional staff. The study committee, while voting in favor of retaining the present Council-Manager form, did support a number of system modifications.

The cost of government would be higher if Tacoma shifted to a strong Mayor-Council government, study committee members concluded. The change would generate a need, or at least a demand, for a full-time Council with adequate staffing to counter-balance the power of the Mayor. The City Manager's salary would not necessarily be saved. In many cities with "strong mayor" governments, a deputy Mayor or city administrator often is hired by the Mayor to handle day to day municipal operations, thereby freeing the city's chief executive to deal with policy questions and mend political fences.

Additional recommendations

The committee also decided it favored:

- Continuing the direct election of the Mayor as the Council's presiding officer;
- Raising the Mayor's compensation commensurate with the position's responsibilities;
- Retaining a part-time Council in its present form with some elected by districts, some at large;
- Continuing the separate governance of parks, utilities, and library; and
- Requiring a formal annual evaluation of the City Manager by the Council.

Each of these recommendations are discussed immediately below:

Popular election of the Mayor

Although popular election of a Mayor in Tacoma is not customary in a traditional Council-Manager form of government, the study committee favors retaining direct voting for the office of Mayor.

Some have suggested that in Council-Manager cities where the Council, not the voters, selects the Mayor, the Council and the Mayor each have a defined political base from which to operate and thus

can be more effective. That is not the view of the study committee, however. It would retain popular election of a ballot-designated Mayor as part of Tacoma's Council-Manager government. A conscientious Mayor can be a cohesive force, acting as a leader of the Council, a community "cheerleader," generating a climate favorable for action and necessary change. The directly-elected Mayor may improve communication between policy makers and the City Manager, providing balance between the two potentially conflicting entities. The members of the committee believe that an elected Mayor with leadership ability can effectively lead the Council and give the government a forward direction.

In the early years after adoption of the Council-Manager form of government, the Mayor was elected by the Council to serve as its presiding officer. Voters ordered the change to direct election as a compromise to achieve both professional management and political leadership. In terms of actual power, the Mayor is a voting Council member who also presides over its meetings. The Mayor acts as the official head of government for ceremonial purposes and tends to become the spokesperson on Council actions. Not designated full-time or part-time, the position currently pays \$40,000 a year, compared to \$18,000 for other Council posts which are considered part-time. The City Manager receives approximately \$120,000. The Mayor's compensation is significantly lower than full-time executive positions in the city government.

While the Charter gives the Mayor only the same general powers of other members of the Council, an active Mayor can assume a leadership role and exercise greater influence in the community. Although some Council members are elected at-large by the whole city, as is the Mayor, the Mayoral title and status may prompt the title holder to attempt to exercise functions that the Charter delegates to the City Manager, causing resentments and conflicts with the City Manager and other Council members. Since the Mayor is essentially a politician who needs to perform to win reelection, such reaching out is understandable, but not necessarily desirable. Fortunately, as noted, significant conflicts of this type do not appear to have developed in Tacoma, although the potential is there.

Full-time vs. part-time Mayor

To encourage persons with talent to run for the directly elected position of Mayor and to give it the status it warrants, the study committee decided against labeling the job as either part-time or full-time. The Charter does not say, but the Mayor's higher salary evidently reflects the realization that the position requires more time and effort than is expected for the position of part-time Council member. Some, but not all, Mayors have chosen to spend full-time on the job. How much time a Mayor puts in is decided by the individual and may be tempered by the political process, the study committee concluded. Labeling the job as full time, might deter some capable persons from seeking the post.

How much to pay the Mayor?

If the Mayor is to serve as the political leader of the city, and provide balance to the power of a City Manager, the pay should reflect this role. Study committee members did not determine a precise amount, but ultimately voted that, in light of the duties required and the position's status, approximately doubling the current \$40,000 salary would be appropriate.

A related question was whether the Mayor should be provided with personal staff. It was noted that the secretary to the Mayor and Council is employed by and accountable to the City Manager. However, a vote among study committee members to allow the Mayor to employ a personal secretary failed. The study committee decided against interfering in this relationship.

Elect Council members at large or by district?

The present method of electing five members of the Council by district and four, including the Mayor, by the city at large should be retained, the study committee decided. A majority regards the existing arrangement as a good compromise between meeting the needs of the five districts and the city as a whole. Citizens are assured representation by their district Council members as well as by at-large members who, presumably, will look at issues from the perspective of the outcomes for the city as a whole. Members of local community groups may secure better access to a Council member who depends upon them for political support. The smaller cost of running by district may encourage some candidates to seek office who otherwise might not do so.

Part-Time vs. full-time?

The present essentially part-time City Council should be retained, the study committee concluded, expressing concern that a full-time Council would increase costs and possibly create conflicts between individual Council members and the City Manager's office.

Some current City Council members favor a full-time Council to provide additional time to become better informed about complex municipal issues. Council members contend that they are the ones who usually get the "phone calls" about community needs and concerns, but are nevertheless expected to refrain from going outside channels and "interfering" with the management of the municipality.

Dividing the Council into committees so that part-time Council members can become better informed on specific issues was one suggestion, but opponents said that Council committee meetings would take more time and require additional staffing. The full Council would still have to act as a body to make committee actions legally effective.

Opponents of a full-time Council argue that it would require addition staff and increase costs needlessly. Those who favored authorizing additional staff pointed out that, lacking independent sources, Council members must rely on information provided by the City Manager and staff aides.

Independent Parks, Utilities, Library

The committee would retain the existing generally independent boards that now govern such city functions as parks, utilities and public library. That system appears to be working well. The review and oversight by the City Council makes a shift to direct City Council control neither necessary nor desirable. The functions of the Civil Service Board and the relationship of the Civil Service Board and the City Council deserves further review however.

The Metropolitan Park District has independent taxing authority which would be lost in consolidation. Such a loss would severely impact the ability to sustain the existing park system.

Light, water and the Beltline Railway are governed by an unpaid five-person Public Utility Board appointed by the City Council. Members, who serve staggered five-year terms, appoint the director of utilities. The combined budget of the three utilities is approximately two-thirds the size of the total city budget. While these utilities function as an arm of local government, they compete increasingly with private business. The utility board spares the City Council from spending a great deal of time on complex technical issues and rate-making. The study committee agreed that its remaining independent is important to minimize political influences upon the utilities' decision making and to reduce the time and required expertise of members of the City Council.

Attracting high quality candidates

Study committee members did not agree that a different form of government would create more candidate interest in running for Council or Mayor. Present compensation levels for Council members apparently has not prevented persons who wish to serve from running for office. As noted, an increase in the Mayor's compensation is recommended, however.

The study committee would like to see further attention to the idea of electing the Mayor and all Council members in the same election. Doing so might stimulate more interest in elections, serve as a possible referendum on the City Manager's conduct of the office and offer candidates for Council and Mayor the opportunity to establish slates on specific issues or common platforms.

Evaluation of the City Manager, performance audits

Since the City Manager serves at the pleasure of the City Council, in some ways that official is evaluated constantly, but a number of study committee members advocated formal annual City Council evaluations, a response to concerns that the City Manager, a City Council appointee, is not directly accountable to the electorate. A performance audit of the City Manager's office was suggested, but the wide ranging scope and expense of this type of audit raised concerns. A classic performance audit of the City Manager's office might require a review of the operations of the entire city government, the same type of review that this report envisages for general government departments, a department at a time. Although a ten year schedule of performance audits to cover general government departments is advocated in this report, there are concerns that their sweeping scope might not be a suitable substitute for less structured annual evaluations of the City Manager by the City Council. The exact type of specific evaluation of the City Manager endorsed by this report is undefined. Further review is also suggested of the proposed general government performance audit prior to putting it into effect.

V. Four suggested Charter changes

After much discussion, four suggestions for Charter changes received substantial support:

- Beginning in the year 2,000, sixty days after installation of the Council and every four years thereafter, the Council must vote on retaining or not retaining the City Manager.
- The Council should be required to enter into a contract with the City Manager to provide severance pay, not to exceed six months, if that official is terminated.
- Annual evaluation of the City Manager by the Council in writing should be required including goal setting and performance measurement.
- Over a 10-year period, every general government department should have a performance audit by an outside firm. The study committee saw a need for a further review of this recommendation to define the scope of the audit before it is implemented.

VI. Summary of Conclusions

✍ The goal of achieving an accountable, responsive and forward looking government for the city of Tacoma can be achieved within the existing Council-Manager form. Accordingly, no basic changes in the form of Tacoma's government are recommended in this report. Most often the phrase, "If it's not broken, don't fix it," seemed to fit the position of many of those interviewed as well as, after extensive deliberations, the CITY CLUB study committee.

✍ Tacoma's Council-Manager form of government with its directly elected Mayor and separately managed parks, public library and some utilities is not all that uncommon. Study committee members did not want to avoid change simply because it might not win voter support. However, no discernible need to switch to a different governmental form was discovered. Lack of strong voter demand for change reinforced that view.

✍ It should be noted that many recent initiatives which have increased the city's economic potential and improved its public image originated with dedicated individuals and organizations, rather than as an outgrowth of actions by the Council, Mayor or City Manager. Examples are the Theater District, Washington State History Museum, I-705, the Tacoma Dome, University of Washington, Tacoma, and improvements in the Proctor Business District. The city government did participate actively in supporting those initiatives, once they were launched.

✍ To move forward with a creative community vision requires leadership rather than any particular governmental structure. Leaders can come from the business community, the neighborhoods, the City Manager, the Council or the Mayor. We did not find any evidence that any one system is superior to any other as an incubator for leadership. The qualities of the persons citizens elect often determine whether the city will be dynamic and forward moving or locked in the status quo, regardless of the form of government.

✍ We see this report as a challenge to the people of Tacoma to make sure, when they go to the polls, that their elected and appointed officials offer the leadership needed to achieve the city's goals.

Appendix A: Topics for further discussion

In this section, the study committee lists topics about Tacoma's local government which may merit exploration in other studies.

Term limits

There was support for amending the Charter to eliminate the Charter provision which effectively prevents Council members who have served only two consecutive four-year terms from seeking the office of Mayor. The current ten-year limit tends to discourage senior Council members moving up from Council member to Mayor. How term limits have affected the selection of Council members over time may also be worth examining.

Election changes

One suggestion which received enthusiastic support from members of the study committee would have all nine members of the City Council, including the Mayor, run for office in the same year and for the same term. This change would heighten interest in city elections and provide an opportunity for issues of concern to be widely discussed and debated. The open public forum discussions preceding general elections conceivably would help reinforce relationships among members of the city's leadership cadre and give voters an opportunity to make their wishes known on key issues.

Employee compensation

Questions arose about how Tacoma's employee compensation program compares to those in other cities of similar size. Such comparisons are difficult to make without further study. Overtime pay practices may warrant scrutiny. Several persons pointed out that the same percentage pay increase provided in union contracts goes to administrative staff members. Does that practice remove incentives to keep wage increases at an acceptable minimum? Also of interest is the question of union labor's reputed influence in Tacoma's city government.

Civil Service Board

The role of the Civil Service Board is not widely understood. What functions it performs and how they are handled might be reviewed. Suggestions that it be eliminated is a possible study topic, as is the way board hearings deal with grievances which may also be covered by arbitration under established collective bargaining agreements.

Regional matters

As the population of the Puget Sound continues to expand and Tacoma becomes increasingly surrounded by growing urban communities, regional issues will require more attention. Several study committee members suggested the possibility of coordinating or combining such specific regional services as parks. Former Seattle Mayor Charles Royer, suggested the growing need for participation by Tacoma and its nearby urban neighbors in regional cooperation efforts.

Appendix B: List of persons interviewed and Responding to Questionnaire

A list of persons interviewed by the study committee follows:

- Bill Baarsma, Tacoma Council member
- Aldo Benedetti, former director of public utilities for Tacoma
- Bob Blystone, Policemen's Union
- Ray Corpuz, City Manager of Tacoma
- Mark Crisson, Director of Public Utilities for Tacoma
- Mike Crowley, Tacoma Council member
- Dave DeForrest, Tacoma Council member
- Brian Ebersole, Mayor of Tacoma
- Bill Evans, Proctor District, civic activist
- Steve Galbraith, Civil Service Board member
- Kevin Hegarty, retiring Public Library Director
- Jim Henderson, Tacoma-Pierce County Municipal League
- Evan McCord, interested citizen
- Pat McElligott, Firemen's Union
- Jim Montgomerie, Director of Metropolitan Park District
- Erling Mork, former City Manager of Tacoma
- Harold Moss, former Mayor of Tacoma
- Dave Rowlands, former City Manager of Tacoma
- Charles Royer, former Mayor of Seattle
- John Terpstra, outgoing director, Port of Tacoma
- Karen Vialle, former Mayor of Tacoma
- Richard Yukubousky, Executive Director, Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington

Questionnaires went to current members of the City Council and to some past members for whom we could secure addresses.

We received responses from the following:

- Robert Evans, Council member
- Ruth McElliott, former Council member
- Sharon McGavick, Council member

A member of the committee appeared at neighborhood Council meetings, explained our purpose and left questionnaires for completion by their members. We received responses from a small number of neighborhood Council members.