



Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://pchomeless.org/> - info@pchomeless.org

January 6, 2021

Mayor Victoria Woodards,
Members of the Tacoma City Council

We, the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness, understand that you are considering raising the sales tax by 1/10th of one percent to generate revenue for housing and services that meet the needs of those most vulnerable in our community. Thank you.

As I write this letter on behalf of the Coalition, the wind is blowing and the coming week's weather forecast is for lows in the mid-20's and a 50% chance of snow by the end of the week. Bethlehem Baptist Family Shelter closed on two days' notice yesterday. The City's two warming centers are scheduled to close February 28. The virus continues to make non-congregate shelter the only safe option and we find ourselves with only a minimal hotel voucher program. Everyone is tired; everyone is scared.

We set out determined that no one experiencing homelessness would die this winter. We were not even into winter when unsheltered people began to die. In partnership with Mayor Woodards, we've held two Safe Shelter Summits and have commitments and new partnerships we hadn't imagined possible. But it is housing that solves homelessness. Safe, decent, permanent, appropriate, affordable to real people at their real incomes housing.

Increasing the sales tax by 1/10th of one percent won't solve all homelessness but it will provide something we don't have now - new local money for new affordable housing units and needed support services every single year. This new money will solve the homelessness of some of our unsheltered neighbors. People become homeless for many reasons but they come out of homelessness one-by-one into housing. Quite simply, housing saves lives: no matter their troubles, no matter their needs.

Your consideration to use your authority to increase the sales tax by 1/10th of one percent for affordable housing gives us hope. Thank you.

We commit to helping you in anyway we can.

For the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness,

Maureen Howard

Senior Policy Analyst
Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness
mhoward@pchomeless.org