

City Innovation Snapshot | Tacoma, United States

Overview

- ▶ Mayor: Victoria Woodards
- ▶ Lead staff on innovation: Benjamin Thurgood
- ▶ Population of municipality: 213,418 (2017)
- ▶ Innovation/open data website: <https://data.cityoftacoma.org/>

Spotlight on Tacoma | Innovation for Continuous Improvement

Tacoma's innovation efforts aim to **help departments identify problems and implement solutions while developing citywide capacity for problem solving and continuous improvement.** Focusing on improving internal and external service delivery, **continuous improvement uses data, process improvement frameworks, training, and other tools** to maximise the value provided to both customers and the public.

Vision and approach to innovation capacity

The city's innovation strategy

Along with 44% of cities surveyed, Tacoma has an **explicit innovation strategy.**

The city most closely associates innovation capacity with the following terms:

Hierarchy-busting

Continuous improvement

Approaches to innovation capacity

Similar to 40% of cities surveyed, Tacoma approaches innovation capacity **both** from a **holistic/macro level**, as well as in **specific policy areas.**

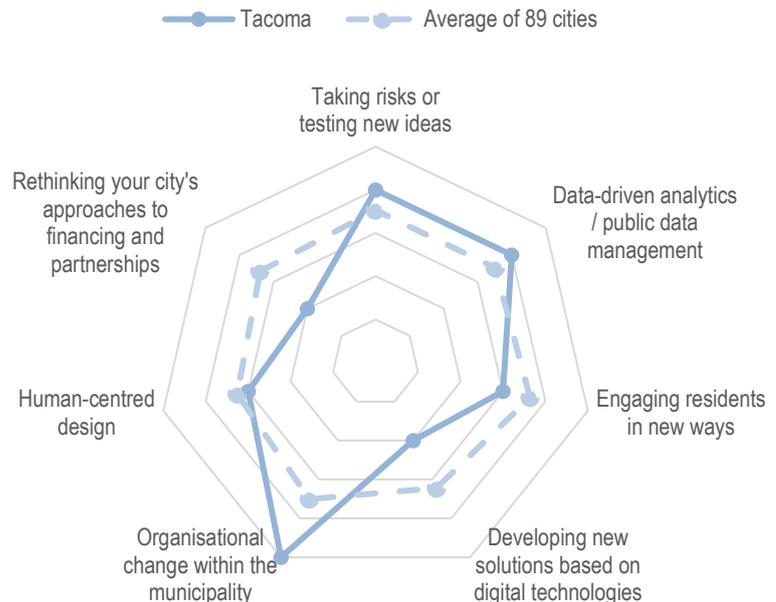
The **top two priority policy areas** for the city's innovation work include:

Social welfare / social services

Social inclusion and equity

Most common innovation activities

Tacoma's most common innovation activity is **facilitating organisational change within the municipal administration.** Its innovation activities also include **taking risks and testing new ideas**, and **promoting data-driven analytics.**



Funding for innovation capacity	
<p>Funding to support innovation capacity</p> <p>Like 77% of cities surveyed, Tacoma has dedicated funding to support innovation capacity, which originates from the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Municipal budget (city council approved funds/operating budget/participatory budgeting) 	<p>Types of activities being funded</p> <p>Tacoma's funding for innovation capacity is generally directed towards generating ideas & brainstorming, which is one of the two most commonly funded activities among all cities surveyed. Tacoma also invests in digital systems and physical infrastructure as well as hosting a variety of workshops using design thinking, lean, user experience design, and strategic foresight.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap; justify-content: space-around; text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #cccccc; width: 200px;">Launching or sustaining a project</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; width: 200px;">Idea generation & brainstorming</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; width: 150px;">Investing in digital systems</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; width: 150px;">Investing in physical infrastructure</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #cccccc; width: 150px;">Paying for services</div> </div>

Organisational structure & staffing	Partnerships for innovation & data
 <p>Tacoma's innovation work is sprinkled throughout the municipality. There are 4 staff for innovation team as well as 1 Organisational Development staff mainly dedicated to innovation at HR department. In addition, at the Office of Budget, there are staff dedicated to performance measures and open data while the Media and Communication Department has a strategic plan manager. In this way, the city's approach to innovation is largely decentralised with a few staff located in a variety of departments.</p> <p>Staff skills and profiles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project manager ✓ Data scientist ✓ Designer ✓ Engineer ✓ Communication officer ✓ Community engagement staff 	 <p>Tacoma has developed partnerships to promote its innovation capacity with other public agencies, private firms, not-for-profit organisations, and city residents/resident associations.</p> <p>To improve data use, the city has also developed data partnerships with academia and think tanks to collect and analyse data, as well as with other cities.</p>

Measuring outcomes																
<p>Policy areas that benefit from sufficient data, or lack sufficient data, to support innovation capacity in the city:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: separate; border-spacing: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Transport / mobility</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Economic development</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Housing & built environment</td> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Policing & law enforcement</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Water</td> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Waste and sewage</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Labour markets & skills</td> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Environment & climate change</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Education</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Culture</td> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Social inclusion, equity</td> <td style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 5px;">Public works</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Tourism</td> <td style="background-color: #c0392b; color: white; padding: 5px;">Digital governance</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>NB: No response provided by the city for the policy areas in grey.</i></p>	Transport / mobility	Economic development	Housing & built environment	Policing & law enforcement	Health	Water	Waste and sewage	Labour markets & skills	Environment & climate change	Education	Culture	Social inclusion, equity	Public works	Tourism	Digital governance	<p>Innovation is helping the city to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve internal government operations ✓ Improve service delivery ✓ Simplify administrative procedures for firms and residents <p>The most critical success factors in supporting the city's innovation work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus on measurement ✓ Dedicated innovation team ✓ Human Resource support ✓ Leadership from Mayor ✓ Culture of innovation in city
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