



Washington State Auditor's Office

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## Accountability Audit Report

# Tacoma Transportation Benefit District

Pierce County

For the period January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2015

Published July 18, 2016

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## Washington State Auditor's Office

July 18, 2016

Mayor and City Council  
Tacoma Transportation Benefit District  
Tacoma, Washington

### Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for District operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our report on the District's compliance and safeguarding of public resources. Our independent audit report describes the overall results and conclusions for areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Troy X. Kelley".

TROY KELLEY  
STATE AUDITOR  
OLYMPIA, WA

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## AUDIT SUMMARY

### Results in brief

In the areas we audited, District operations complied with applicable requirements and provided adequate safeguarding of public resources. The District also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in the areas we examined.

### About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Tacoma Transportation Benefit District from January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2015.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the District's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Open public meeting minutes
- Entity formation

## RELATED REPORTS

### **Financial**

Our opinion on the District's financial statements is provided in a separate report, which includes the District's financial statements. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISTRICT

In November 2012, the Tacoma City Council created the Tacoma Transportation Benefit District through the adoption of Ordinance 28099. The District was established for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, providing and funding transportation improvements within the District, consistent with any state, regional or local transportation plans, and necessitated by existing or reasonably foreseeable congestion levels.

The Tacoma Transportation Benefit District is governed by a Board, comprised of Tacoma City Councilmembers acting ex officio and independently of their elected position, as required by the authorizing state law. City management has operational responsibility and services are provided entirely to the City. In November 2012, the District Board imposed a vehicle license fee of \$20 within the District's boundaries. The fee was first collected in June of 2013 by the Washington State Department of Licensing. The \$20 vehicle license fee generates approximately \$5 million in a biennium.

In 2015, Tacoma residents passed Transportation Benefit District Proposition A, which permits the District to levy an additional sales tax of one tenth of 1 percent for a period of ten years. Proposition A is projected to generate \$4.5 million per year. The additional funding will go towards transportation projects outlined in the Comprehensive Transportation Program including permanent pothole repair, street resurfacing, maintenance and improvements to arterials and freight access roads, installation of school crossing beacons, and building missing sidewalks. The additional sales tax is effective for 2016 to 2025.

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*Information current as of report publish date.*

## Audit history

This is the first audit for the Transportation Benefit District. You can find current and past audit reports for the Tacoma Transportation Benefit District at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously, and provide training and technical assistance to governments, and have an extensive quality assurance program.

Contact information for the State Auditor's Office	
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