

Tacoma

People and Place

Location

Tacoma is on Commencement Bay along the eastern shore of south Puget Sound. Situated in Pierce County, the city encompasses 50.8 square miles of land and 12.5 square miles of water. The nearest major U.S. city is Seattle, a 29-mile drive north. Tacoma's geographic coordinates are lat 47°14'09"N, long 122°26'21"W.

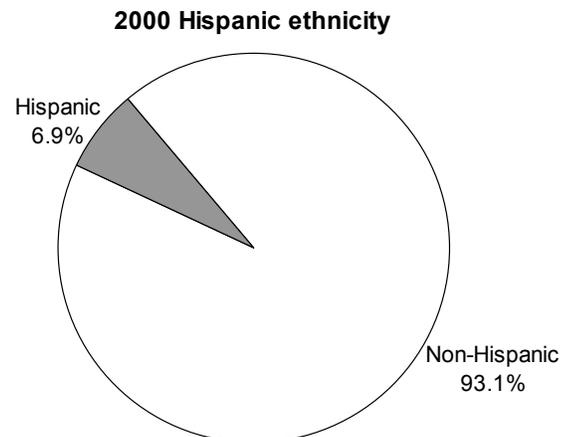
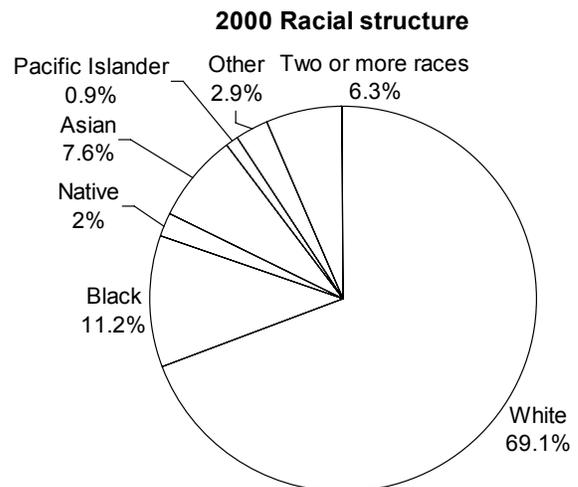
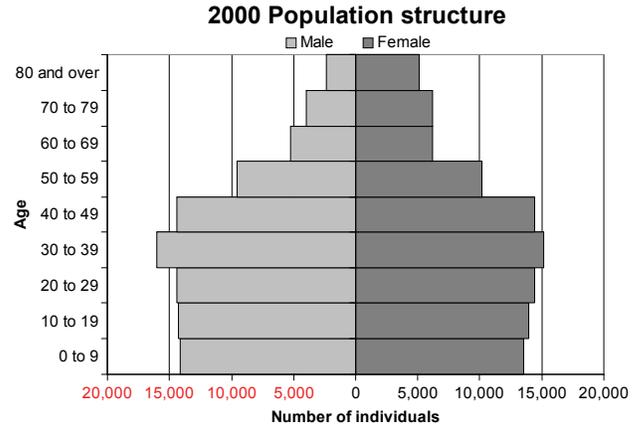
Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Tacoma's population was 193,556, a 9.6% increase from 1990. The gender composition was 51.2% female and 48.8% male. The median age of 33.9 was comparable to the national median of 35.3. In 2000 21.6% were 14 years of age or younger and 38.6% were between the ages of 25 and 49. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 82.4% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 18.8% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 6% had earned a graduate or professional degree; compared to the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The vast majority of Tacoma's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census in 2000 was white (69.1%), followed by black (11.2%), Asian (7.6%), people who identified with two or more races (6.3%), people who identified with another race (2.9%), American Indian and Alaskan native (2.0%), and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (0.9%). Ethnicity data indicate that 6.9% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 11.9% were foreign-born population, with 48.0% from Asian countries and 16% from Mexico.

History

The name Tacoma is derived from the Native American word "Tacobet," meaning "Mother of the Waters."¹ Tacobet is the native name for the snow-capped volcano that explorer George Vancouver named Mount Rainier. The Puyallup Tribe had several settlements on the delta of the Puyallup River, where modern-day Tacoma is situated. Natives fished, hunted, and trapped in the area, never needing to go far in search of food. In 1841 U.S. Navy Lt. Charles Wilkes began his survey of Puget Sound from the area's natural harbor, which he then named Commencement Bay. A developer arrived in 1868 with intentions to build a city and promptly started a campaign to attract settlers. Five years later the Northern Pacific Railroad chose



Commencement Bay as its western terminus.² Tacoma was born with the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Roughly 200 inhabitants quickly became 5,000. “From 1883, the first year passengers could ride the train uninterrupted from Chicago to Tacoma, to 1890 the population of Tacoma grew from about 5,000 to more than 30,000.”³

The city grew steadily in the early 1900s. Water and hydroelectric systems were built. During this period almost 75% of the Puyallup Reservation was taken, using federal laws, for industrial development. World War I and World War II brought industrial booms to the Tacoma area. During the Great Depression the area’s economy suffered but was lifted with military spending as the U.S. Army expanded Camp Lewis to Fort Lewis. In 1944 Tacoma and its rival neighbor Seattle cosponsored a new airport between the two cities and named it Sea-Tac Airport. Tacoma was rocked by scandal in 1951 as widespread vice and official corruption was brought to light. As a result, the style of government in Tacoma shifted to a voter approved city manager. In the 1970s the Port of Tacoma became an important link to Asia and Alaska, which continues today.

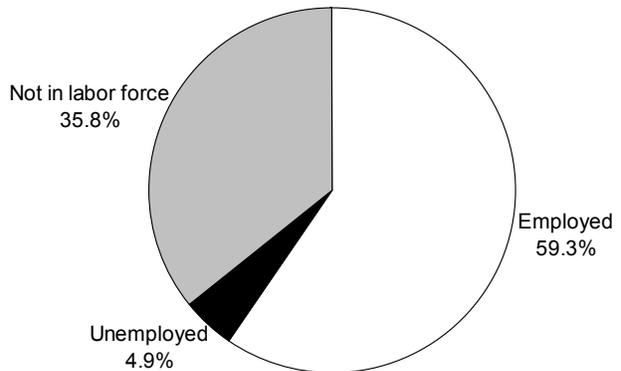
Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 59.3% of the potential labor force 16 years and older were employed, 4.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 7.7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 35.8% were not in the labor force, as compared to the national average of 36.1%. The top employment sectors were educational, health, and social services (21.3%), local, state, and federal governments (16.6%, of which 0.3% were in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting), manufacturing (12.5%), and retail trade (11.9%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 0.9%, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data. Three major U.S. military operations as well as The Boeing Company and Intel Corporation contribute greatly to the Tacoma economy.⁴

The per capita income in 1999 was \$19,130 and the median household income was \$37,879. In 1999 15.9% lived below the poverty level, slightly higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 76.7% lived in family households. There were 81,102 housing units, with 54.7% owner occupied and 45.3% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 6.1%.

2000 Employment structure



Governance

Tacoma, incorporated in 1884, is governed by a nine-member city council. The council is comprised of a mayor, five district representatives, and three at-large representatives. A city manager is appointed by the council to administer day-to-day operations and to carry out council policies. Tacoma is the largest city in Pierce County and serves as the county seat. Tacoma has an 8.8% sales and use tax rate and a variable lodging tax rate of 2–5%, depending on the number of rooms in the establishment. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in Washington.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office and U.S. Citizenship office are in Seattle. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are routinely held in the Seattle-Tacoma area. The nearest Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Regional Office is 68 miles southwest in Montesano. The 13th U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) District headquarters are in Seattle. There is a USCG Port Security Unit in Tacoma.

Facilities

Tacoma is accessible by land, air, and water. Tacoma is on Interstate 5 (north-south) and on Washington Highway 16, connecting the city to the Kitsap Peninsula in the west. The Tacoma Narrows Airport is a municipally-owned facility across the Puget Sound in Gig Harbor (6 miles west). The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is 18 miles north. The Port of Tacoma operates under state-enabling legislation and is an independent, municipal corporation.

The Tacoma Public School District offers 39 elementary, 11 middle, and 7 high schools. There are also a number of private schools at all grade levels.

Tacoma is home to a number of institutes of higher learning including the University of Washington Tacoma campus, the University of Puget Sound, Pacific Lutheran University, Pierce College, Tacoma Community College, and L. H. Bates Technical College.⁵

Tacoma Power, a municipally owned facility, administers electricity. The city also provides municipally owned and operated water, sewer, and garbage service, as well as a curbside recycling program through Tacoma Public Utilities. The Tacoma Police and Fire departments administer public safety. Health services are provided by five health centers, including three hospitals and a children's hospital. The tourism industry in Tacoma is well developed with several hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts.

The Port of Tacoma accounts for more than 43,000 jobs in Pierce County and 113,000 jobs in Washington State.⁶ The port has 2,400 acres that are used for a wide array of cargo shipping, warehousing, distributing, and manufacturing. The port provides three dockside intermodal rail yards. More than 70% of the port's international container cargo comes from or ends up in the central and eastern regions of North America. In addition, the Port of Tacoma handles more than 70% of the marine cargo moving between Alaska and the lower 48 states. The Port of Tacoma also serves commercial fishing interests. The port is home to roughly 40 of Seattle-based Trident Seafoods' fishing and processing vessels. Trident prepares the vessels for fishing voyages and maintains and repairs boats and equipment at the 33-acre Tacoma facility. Many of the Tacoma area's independently owned and operated commercial fishing boats call in at the port-owned City Marina. A majority of these boats are gillnet or purse-seine vessels that fish for salmon in Washington and Alaska waters.⁷

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

There were at least four seafood processors operating in Tacoma in 2000, employing approximately 110 people. The estimated total weight of their processed products in 2000 was 1,072,752 pounds, valued at \$8,035,010. Processed salmon products were the top item in terms of pounds and revenue (842,979 lbs/\$6,593,303).

One local seafood company, Northern Fish Products, Inc., has been in business since 1912, when the company was purchased by Johannes Swanes, a Norwegian immigrant. Northern Fish has five divisions: Retail Distribution, Food Service Distribution, Northern Classics Brand Smoking, Military Commissary, and

Processing. The company maintains a retail store offering fresh, frozen, smoke, canned, and cured seafood, as well as a wholesale division with several programs and services including air shipment, cross dock, custom processing, tray packing, and so forth.⁸

In 2000 536 vessels, including 99 commercial vessels, 99 personal use vessels, and 337 tribal commercial vessels, delivered nonconfidential landings to. Landings in Tacoma were made in the following West Coast fisheries in 2000 (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels making landings): coastal pelagic 177 t/\$171,979/7; crab 3 t/\$14,813/4; salmon 352 t/\$542,002/235; highly migratory species confidential/confidential/2; shellfish 254 t/\$2,039,144/60; and other species 101 t/\$295,465/21.

Tacoma residents owned 25 commercial vessels in 2000, including 13 vessels that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 2/0/0, crab 4/0/0, groundfish 5/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 15/6/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 7/0/0.⁹

In 2000 the number of Tacoma residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 3/0/0, crab 2/0/0, groundfish 3/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 28/5/3, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 5/0/0.¹⁰

Tacoma residents held 66 registered state commercial fishing permits in 2000. The number of permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 7/0/0, crab 3/0/0, groundfish 8/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 31/5/4, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 8/0/0.¹¹

Sportfishing

A number of charter vessels, principally targeting salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon, operate out of Tacoma. In 2000 at least five charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Tacoma. There are 13 licensed vendors selling sportfishing permits in Tacoma. In 2003 Tacoma vendors made 23,877 sportfishing license transactions valued at \$387,701. The annual sport catch in Catch Record Card Area 11 (Tacoma–Vashon Island), based on catch card data, was 14,212 fish including 8,108 Chinook salmon, 6,054 coho salmon, and 50 chum salmon during the 2000–2001 license year. Marine anglers made 72,194 trips in Area 11. In 2000–2001, fishermen caught six steelhead in Area 11. The bottomfish catch in Area 11 was 2,611.

Subsistence

Subsistence harvest for marine species may exist in the Tacoma area. However the extent of subsistence harvesting is difficult to quantify due to a scarcity of data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 there were 47 vessels owned by Tacoma residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries. Community members landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish confidential/confidential/1, Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish confidential/confidential/1, halibut confidential/confidential/2, salmon 1,407.8 t/\$1,310,380/28, and shellfish confidential/confidential/3.

In 2000 Tacoma residents held 57 North Pacific commercial fishing permits, including 35 Tacoma residents who held state permits and 18 who held federal permits (note: it is possible for individuals to hold more than one permit at a time). Tacoma residents held 2 crab and 4 groundfish License Limitation Program permits and 2 crab, 7 BSAI groundfish, 4 halibut, 29 salmon, and 5 shellfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. In 2000 Tacoma residents held 710,533 halibut and 1,240,556 sablefish individual fishing quota shares.

In 2000 157 Tacoma residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

While charter boats in Tacoma primarily target West Coast fisheries, sport fishermen in Tacoma also are involved in Alaskan fisheries. In 2000 at least two charter businesses in Tacoma offered fishing excursions in Alaska. Tacoma residents purchased 957 Alaskan sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. City of Tacoma. No date. Interesting facts about Tacoma. Online at <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/Page.aspx?hid=1070> [accessed 31 January 2007].

2. See note 1.

3. M. Sullivan. 1999. A mountain calling: The Tacoma eastern railroad-linking Puget Sound and Mount Rainier National Park. *Columbia Magazine* 13(4):34-39. Online at <http://www.wshs.org/wshs/columbia/articles/0499-a3.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].

4. See note 1.

5. City-data.com. No date. Tacoma: Education and research. Online at <http://www.city-data.com/us-cities/The-West/Tacoma-Education-and-Research.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].

6. B. Mann and D. Goodman. 2005. 2006 Pierce County economic index report. Online at http://www.tacomachamber.org/chamberprograms/BusinessTrade/pdf/PCEI_Report.pdf [accessed 31 January 2007].

7. Port of Tacoma. 2000. Economic impact. Online at <http://www.portoftacoma.com/shipping.cfm?sub=50> [accessed 31 January 2007].

8. Northern Fish Products, Inc. 2006. Retail. Online at <http://www.northernfish.com/retail.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].

9. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

10. See note 9.

11. See note 9.