

Walk Tacoma 2021: Pride Walk

<https://goo.gl/maps/zCR3sGr85GB1rWhQ9>



Stop 1: Wright Park

Wright Park was the initial location for what used to be called "Out in the Park," which is Tacoma Pride's predecessor. This was a summer event attended by several hundred people, and was considered a large party, at the time, for LGBTQ people. It was a day and a place for them to be out and safe for a few hours without the fear of discrimination or harassment. Out in the Park was its own non-profit, and they organized the event each year in the early 2000s.



Stop 2: S. Tacoma Ave. & S. 4th St.

This location at Tacoma Ave & S. 4th St. was Rainbow Center's second office. Rainbow Center was originally housed in a small closet in the original United Way building. This was supported with a small grant from the Pride Foundation in 1997. Within a few years, they had raised enough money to move to this location. The building is now gone, however. And they were able to hire their first staff. The Rainbow Center has grown from a small organization with no staff and a \$5000 annual budget to an organization with nine

staff and an annual budget of nearly \$1 million. The organization's mission is to educate, advocate, and celebrate with and on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community in the south Puget Sound.



Stop 3: McMenamins / Elks Temple

McMenamins Elk Lodge has a rich and long history. Built in 1916, it was a grand lodge for the Brotherhood of Elks. In the 50s and 60s, it hosted some of the first drag shows seen in public in Tacoma. Some of those performers are still living in Tacoma today. By the late 1960s, it seemed outdated, and the Elks moved to another location. The space was used to host events for the next 20 years, until it closed in 1986. A few years ago, it was purchased and renovated by McMenamins and

today it hosts performances of all kinds including drag and drag queen bingo.



Stop 4: St. Helens & S. 7th St.

This was the fourth office location of the Rainbow Center. It was leased from 2006-2014 until they moved into their current building at 22nd and Pacific Ave. To one side of the building is the Silverstone, a long-standing gay bar in Tacoma. To the other side was the Republican headquarters for Tacoma. This was a representative metaphor for the social-political climate that the LGBTQ+ community faced at that time. This was the first office the Rainbow Center had with a storefront, so

it also represented our emergence from the proverbial closet.



Stop 5: Theater Square Park

This is the location where Out in the Park became Tacoma Pride. The Rainbow Center picked up the event from its originators and changed the name to match other Pride celebrations around the country.

Tacoma Pride is a formal trademark

of the Rainbow Center, and anyone who uses the term requires their express permission. This event grew significantly from its time at Wright Park and began to draw thousands of attendees while it took place in Theatre Square Park.



Stop 6: Pacific Ave. & 10th St.

This was the third office for the Rainbow Center. This was really a stop-gap between the office at Tacoma and S. 4th, where the lease ended, and the necessary fundraising to get a larger office with a storefront. Rainbow Center was only located in this space for a couple of years before moving to the St. Helen's office. If you look up from 10th St., you will see windows on the 4th floor, where Rainbow Center proudly displayed a rainbow flag.



Stop 7: Pacific Ave. between S. 7th & St. 9th St.

When Tacoma Pride became too large for the Theatre Square Park, it moved to this location. In addition to these two blocks on Pacific, it includes A Street between 7th and 9th, as well as all of 7th Avenue between Pacific and A Street. Finally, it also includes all of Fireman's Park, across the corner. The last time the Tacoma Pride street festival occurred was in 2019, due to the pandemic. There were two large stages for performers, a beer garden and more than 100 vendors. Somewhere between 18,000-20,000 attended the festival that day, making it the largest in Rainbow Center's history.



Stop 8: Destiny's (Dorky's)

The current location of Dorky's at 9th and Pacific was the home of Destiny's, a bar that served food and epic drag shows, and only closed a couple of decades ago. The bar was owned by two gay men who wanted to provide entertainment for the general public, as well as a safe place for LGBTQ+ people to hang out and be themselves.



Stop 9: 733 Commerce

In the early 1900s, this was the Tacoma Yacht Club headquarters; but in the 1980s and 90s, there was a bar and restaurant downstairs, and a gay dance hall with a bar upstairs that often featured drag shows. In the downstairs bar was a piano, often being played by one of the local gay men. The staff were required to wear tuxedo shirts and ties, and they could not wear any facial jewelry. It was owned by two older gay gentlemen, who wanted Tacoma to have an upscale place for the LGBTQ+ community to dine, drink and catch a show. It closed in approximately 1997, when they lost the lease on the property. A year later, Club Silverstone emerged and filled the gap left by the 733.