



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: **Council Member Robert Thoms**
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: **Resolution – Adding an application to the 2022 Land Use Regulatory Code Amendment process to consider increasing districts where electric fences are allowed – November 30, 2021**
DATE: **11/23/2021**

SUMMARY & PURPOSE:

A Resolution to add an application to increase districts where electric fences are allowed to the 2022 Land Use Regulatory Code Amendment process for consideration and technical analysis.
[Council Member Thoms]

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members Hunter, McCarthy, and Thoms

BACKGROUND:

This Council Member’s Recommendation is Based On:

This resolution directs the City Manager to have staff and the Tacoma Planning Commission evaluate a code change to increase the number of districts where electric fences are allowed through the 2022 Land Use Regulatory Code Amendment process.

Throughout the City, businesses have raised concerns of increased theft and safety issues that have added severe expenses. The intention of this resolution is to propose code that would allow the use of electric fences as a secondary security method to protect assets like parking lots. The fencing would be installed on the inside of a traditional fence, and would work as a secondary deterrent for theft. Currently, electric fences are prohibited in all zoning districts except for industrial. Consideration of code changes should be limited to zoning in downtown, commercial, and mixed use districts. It does not include residential zoning. Sample language and development standards for consideration can be found in Exhibit A attached to the resolution.

The proposal to change where electric fences will require a change to TMC 13.06.090.K.3, which requires review by the Tacoma Planning Commission. The project cycle of the 2022 Annual Amendment to the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan and/or the Land Use Regulatory Code (“2022 amendment”) runs from January 2021 through June 2022. The *One Tacoma Plan* is the blueprint for achieving the community’s vision for future growth and the Land Use Regulatory Code (Title 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code) is a key tool to implementing the goals and policies of the Plan. These documents are reviewed and amended, generally, on an annual basis in accordance with the State Growth Management Act in order to maintain their effectiveness. The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the City Council for final review and approval in 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):

Tacoma business owners have contacted City Council members requesting code be changed to allow for electric fences. These business owners have already faced losses due to theft and are seeking alternative ways to reduce further losses that threaten their business.



2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Small, locally owned businesses are less able to absorb the cost of property theft and other crime on their property. The recent increases in property crime, vandalism, and thefts targeting businesses threaten our local economy.

Economy/Workforce: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.

Increase the number of Tacoma households that have livable wage jobs within proximity to the city.
Decrease the number of vacant properties downtown and in the neighborhood business districts.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Select Index Score.

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Council Members have heard from local businesses that have been victims of theft and other crime that threaten their ability to maintain their businesses in the City. Expanding options for these business owners to secure resources their businesses rely on will increase the perception of safety and quality of life, and also will reduce the likelihood the businesses will shut down or leave the City.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. Take no action	Provide more time for other priorities.	Does not address immediate public safety concerns of business community.
2. Wait for future amendment cycle	Provide more time in immediate future for other priorities, more time to analyze proposal.	Does not address immediate public safety concerns of business community.

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:

The 2022 amendment cycle runs from January 2021 through June 2022, with final recommendations being brought to the City Council for approval.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECOMMENDATION:

The recommendation is to include this application to the Land Use Regulatory Code Amendment in the 2022 process in order to expedite considering solutions for local businesses impacted by theft and other public safety concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact