



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Anita Gallagher, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager’s Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance—Amendments to Tacoma Municipal Code Title 8 – September 24, 2019
DATE: September 10, 2019

SUMMARY:

An Ordinance adopting amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Title 8-Public Safety, Chapter 8.27-Park Code, to address emerging public safety issues impacting the quality of life in Tacoma’s parks.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Council Member Keith Blocker
Council Member Catherine Ushka

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

BACKGROUND:

City staff, including Tacoma Police Department, have worked collaboratively with staff from the Metropolitan Parks District of Tacoma to review Tacoma Municipal Code Title, 8, Public Safety, pertaining to the Park Code and have developed recommendations for updates to the Code. The Park Code was last updated nearly 10 years ago and staff have since determined that amendments are necessary to respond to current and emerging public safety issues in Tacoma’s parks.

On August 22, 2019, the Council’s Community Vitality and Safety Committee discussed the proposed amendments and recommended forwarding to the full Council for consideration. The Board of Park Commissioners for the Metropolitan Parks District of Tacoma passed a Resolution recommending City Council adoption of the proposed Code amendments at their Park Board meeting on September 9, 2019.

ISSUE:

City of Tacoma and Metropolitan Parks District of Tacoma staff recommend updates to the Tacoma Municipal Code Title, 8 Public Safety, pertaining to the Park Code, to respond to current and emerging issues that impact patrons of the parks system in Tacoma. Many of the revisions address minor “housekeeping” items- e.g. aligning penalties for violation with State law, clarifying definitions or updating references. A summary of the substantive Park Code revisions being proposed include:

- Clarifies current prohibition of smoking in parks to be inclusive of the use of e-cigarettes, or vapor products.
- Adds drones, “sky lanterns,” unmanned aircraft systems and motorized models as prohibited equipment except as specifically authorized.



- Aligns electric scooters, e-bikes, mono-wheel devices, surreys, scooters and similar devices with existing rules for bicycles and skateboards- permitting them on roads, sidewalks, paths or trails in any park.
- Defines vehicles to include personal transportation devices that are motorized.
- Clarifies continuous moorage in a park as three non-consecutive or consecutive overnight periods within a 10-day period.
- Limits permissible “structures” in parks to only those specifically authorized or are temporary that have only a roof and no walls.
- Authorizes the park district to adopt a code of conduct that regulates activities or behavior in parks to protect the public’s health and safety, to promote respect for the rights and needs of others, and to preserve park property.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose to modify or not adopt the requested amendments, which would impede the Metropolitan Parks District of Tacoma’s ability to manage emerging public safety issues impacting quality of life in Tacoma’s parks.

RECOMMENDATION:

City of Tacoma and Metropolitan Parks District of Tacoma staff recommend updates to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Title 8, Public Safety, as outlined in the requested Ordinance.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.