



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: John Harrington, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services Department
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services Department
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution setting April 1, 2014, for Public Hearing regarding the Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code – Requested City Council
Date: March 18, 2014
DATE: February 28, 2014

SUMMARY:

The City Council is requested to consider a resolution on March 18, 2014, to set April 1, 2014, as the date for a public hearing regarding the Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code Chapters 13.05 (Permitting) and 13.06 (Zoning). The Council is required to conduct a public hearing before enacting any amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

This action supports the City of Tacoma's strategic policy priority Strengthen and support Human Services, Public Education, and Diverse Higher Learning opportunities in Tacoma.

BACKGROUND:

The proposed amendments will establish a permitting process and development standards for temporary homeless camps within the City of Tacoma that are run by religious organizations as provided for in RCW 35.21.915. The proposal would add regulations to protect the public health and safety as well as the residents in such camps. Rules are included for the application and permit review process, camp size, number and frequency of the camps, and specific health and fire regulations for up to 100 residents to safely live for up to 93-123 days in a field living environment. Associated with the proposed amendment, the City of Tacoma prepared a non-project State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and a Preliminary Determination of Non-Significance was issued on December 30, 2013.

The Planning Commission has completed its review through a public process, including a public hearing on January 22, 2014, and has forwarded its recommendation for adoption to the Council on February 19, 2014.

ISSUE:

The proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code for the Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process have been developed as a result of a robust public outreach process, analysis of existing regulations in other Washington cities and several visits to active homeless camps including interviews with camp residents and host organizations. The primary issue for the proposal is the contention that the proposed regulations for the camps go beyond the state law limitation of only protecting public health and safety. Approximately 50 church sites in the city would meet the locational and lot size criteria to host a camp.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are no specific alternatives being considered at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of a resolution on March 18, 2014, to set April 1, 2014, for a public hearing to consider the Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code Chapters 13.05 (Permitting) and 13.06 (Zoning), followed by the first and second readings of an adopting ordinance occurring on April 15 and April 22, respectively.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.