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COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Food Truck Vendor License
DATE: July 13, 2016

SUMMARY:

A stakeholder work group comprised of food truck vendors, brick and mortar restaurants, the Washington Restaurant Association, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department staff and City staff representing Community and Economic Development, Tax & License, Code Enforcement, Traffic and Parking met over the past several months to develop food truck policy and regulation for vending from the right-of-way. The new regulatory license in Title 6 - Sales - Food Truck Vendors establishes requirements and process based on cooperative efforts by the workgroup, findings from a 2015 pilot program and peer cities best practices.

BACKGROUND:

The City conducted a pilot program in 2015 through the Special Events permitting process. The pilot program proved that 1) small, flexible businesses play an important role in the economy of Tacoma, 2) that food trucks are desired and 3) standard regulations needed to be established.

ISSUE:

The recommended food truck regulations will establish a transparent, fair and navigable process for food trucks to operate on right-of-way. The new regulations provide for an application process, location review process and operating requirements.

Locations

Five locations have been identified and are pending Tacoma Pierce County Health Department sales site agreement acquisition (restroom agreements) by food truck operators, and establishment of operating hours. Three of the locations are downtown, and two are in the Dome district.

- Tacoma Ave S (near the main library)
- South 11th and A Street
- Broadway in front of Pierce Transit Park
- E 25th St between E C St and E D St
- Puyallup Ave (near Greyhound station)

The new regulations provide for standard requirements when establishing food truck locations and a review process if additional locations on right-of-way are identified by food truck vendors as desirable locations to operate in the future.

Signage

As a result of consultations with the Parking Technical Advisory Group it has been determined that permanent zoning signage would put an undue burden on the public use of the parking zones during non-food truck usage. Instead, food truck operators will be required to post an approved A-board sign 24 hours prior to using one of the designated locations for food truck vending. This requirement is similar to how the City coordinates Special Event impacts to the managed right-of-way.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternative is to continue the current process for food truck vendors through special event permitting, food truck vendors at farmers markets and events, and private property operations. The proposed solution will augment the already established processes and add a standard regulatory process to ensure safe food truck operations in the City.

RECOMMENDATION:

Community and Economic Development and the Finance Department recommend adopting 6B.175 Sales – Food Truck Vendors that establishes regulations for food truck locations and inspections of food trucks operating in the City.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is estimated to be minimal fiscal impact from the food truck vendor license fees. The fees received from the licenses are set at a price that covers the City's cost of administering the license, inspection and enforcement activities.