



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Phyllis Macleod, Hearing Examiner *PKM*
Troy Stevens, Sr. Real Estate Specialist, Public Works, Facilities *tas*
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance Request No. 15-0298 – Street Vacation – April 7, 2015
DATE: March 19, 2015

SUMMARY:

The University of Washington Tacoma (UW Tacoma) submitted a petition to vacate portions of Jefferson Avenue south of S. 17th Street, for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, landscaping, traffic management, parking and vehicle access to the UW Tacoma. The property is no longer needed for street purposes due to a project realigning S. 17th Street in that area.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

This street vacation advances the following strategic policy priorities:

- Strengthen and support human services, public education, and diverse higher learning opportunities in Tacoma.
- Foster neighborhood, community, and economic development vitality and sustainability.
- Plan for and improve public infrastructure that meets the transportation needs of all Tacoma residents and visitors.

BACKGROUND:

UW Tacoma is petitioning for vacation of a portion of Jefferson Avenue lying south of S. 17th Street that is no longer needed for street purposes due to realignment of S. 17th Street. The realignment project leaves an area along the former alignment of Jefferson Street that will become an open greenspace available to the public for pedestrian and bicycle improvements and landscaping. UW Tacoma would take responsibility for designing, improving, and maintaining the greenspace. The property would not be needed for future road connectivity and the vacation will not adversely affect the street pattern in the area. In fact, it is part of a larger effort to improve traffic flow through construction of the S. 17th Street realignment project. UW Tacoma has funded the realignment project, which has also conferred benefits on the public and the City by increasing the safety of traffic in the area and by providing an opportunity for the City to save money on upgrading utilities. Based upon the overall benefits of the traffic project and benefits to the public provided by the greenspace that would be created, UW Tacoma is seeking waiver of the payment otherwise applicable to the street vacation which the city estimates at \$126,498.12. UW Tacoma points out that the waiver is consistent with a waiver granted for a prior street vacation they completed near the campus. (Vacation Petition No. 124.1216). The street vacation was not opposed by any member of the public at the hearing. The Hearing examiner issued a recommendation to approve the proposed street vacation subject to utility easements and to waive the payment of market value due to public benefits conferred.



ALTERNATIVES:

The Council could choose not to approve the proposed street vacation, however, the project appears to comply with the standards for obtaining a street vacation. The Council could also choose to charge UW Tacoma based on the market value of the property vacated rather than waiving the payment in recognition of the public benefits of the project. The benefits are significant and would meet the standard for waiver of the payment, however, the decision is within the discretion of the Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

The requested vacation petition is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions contained herein and the project is recommended for waiver of compensation under TMC 9.22.010.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A.