



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Diane Powers, Director, Office of Equity and Human Rights
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: **Ordinance to Extend Temporary Tenant Protections through TMC 1.95
“Tenant Rights Code” until January 31, 2019 – October 9, 2018**
DATE: September 28, 2018

SUMMARY:

On April 26, 2018, the City Council passed Ordinance No. 28508, to increase protections for tenants through September 30, 2018. The primary provisions of this ordinance were to 1) create a 90-day notice period in the event of demolition, substantial rehabilitation, or conversion to another use; and 2) establishing enforcement procedures, including who to contact in the event notice is not provided. On September 11, 2018, the City Council passed Ordinance No. 28527 to extend these protections for tenants through October 31, 2018. The purpose of this proposed ordinance is to extend TMC 1.95 “Tenant Rights Code” through January 31, 2019.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The strategic policy priorities that best align with this action are the following:

- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Cultivate a vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

BACKGROUND:

The City Manager, through City Staff, has been researching a range of tenant protections. City Staff has gathered feedback of proposed tenant protections from a stakeholders’ group, consisting of both tenants and landlords.

Since the original ordinance was enacted, City staff has developed a more comprehensive proposed Rental Housing Code, which includes a new “Tenant Relocation Assistance” Section. Before this new code goes into effect, adequate notice (including outreach and training) about the new Rental Housing Code should be given to Tacoma housing providers and tenants. In order for this process to be productive, staff is proposing that the new Rental Housing Code becomes effective on February 1, 2019, including a new provision relating to notices to vacate.

At the September 27, 2018 Community Vitality and Safety (CVS) Committee meeting, staff presented the recommended amendments and new additions to TMC 1.95, including an estimated financial impact related to costs for staff and outreach and education efforts in the first year and caseload driven costs in the second year.



ISSUE:

Additional time is needed to adequately examine possible options to expand tenants' rights while not creating undue harm to landlords. After the recommendations were shared at the CVS Committee, a motion was passed to bring the recommended changes to TMC 1.95 to the full Council at a future Study Session. In addition, there will be a public hearing at the October 2, 2018 City Council meeting related to relocation assistance, which is required by state law through RCW 59.18.440 (1) and (3).

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could chose to reject the proposed ordinance and let the current protections lapse or modify the proposed language

RECOMMENDATION:

The Office of Equity and Human Rights and the Neighborhood and Community Services Department recommend the proposed extension and requests approval by the City Council. The extension is important to have adequate time to offer sound proposals for an expansion of tenants' rights that would not create undue hardship for landlords.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to this proposed ordinance.