



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

FROM: James P. Duggan, Fire Chief, Tacoma Fire Department
Michael Fitzgerald, Assistant to the Chief, Budget & Finance, Tacoma Fire Department

COPY: City Council and City Clerk

SUBJECT: Ordinance – Amending Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 3.09 to adopt Building Inspection Fees to take effect on June 1, 2015

DATE: November 13, 2014

SUMMARY:

An Ordinance amending Chapter 3.09 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), adding a new section, 3.09.050 for inspection fees, and renumbering Section 3.09.050 to .060 and other various sections, the Fire Code of the City of Tacoma, that regulates hazards to life, property, and the environment within building occupancies or premises within the City of Tacoma and providing for code enforcement inspections of buildings of various industrial, commercial, and multifamily uses and therefore adopting new fees to be assessed for building inspections.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

Passage of this ordinance will further the Council’s Strategic Policy Priority to “strengthen and support public safety, human services, public education, and diverse higher learning opportunities in Tacoma.”

BACKGROUND:

The Tacoma Fire Department (TFD) performs periodic code enforcement inspections of buildings, in accordance with the adopted Fire Code, to protect people, property, and the environment. This fire and life safety code compliance program is one of TFD’s fire prevention activities that helps improve the overall safety of our community by reducing the risk of fires and hazardous materials incidents. The routine inspections identify and correct fire code violations, educate business and property owners about fire and life safety issues, reduce fire loss, which helps keep insurance rates low, and provide less demand on public emergency services. TFD plans to enhance the inspection program by improving scheduling, training of personnel, and online payments as the Accela Fire module is activated.

ISSUE:

Given the desire to reduce the City’s dependence upon federal grants to maintain TFD staffing, TFD proposes that a fee be charged for building inspections to help offset inspection costs. The proposed fees will not fully fund the inspection program.

ALTERNATIVES:

If the ordinance is not adopted, TFD will be unable to charge for building inspections, resulting in an estimated General Fund reduction of \$450,000 for 2015–2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

TFD recommends approval of this ordinance to begin assessing fees for building inspections.



FISCAL IMPACT:

EXPENDITURES:

FUND NUMBER & FUND NAME *	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
0010 Fire General Fund	253000	Various	\$450,000
TOTAL			\$450,000

* General Fund: Include Department

REVENUES:

FUNDING SOURCE	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
0010 Fire General Fund	253000	4321010	\$450,000
TOTAL			\$450,000

POTENTIAL POSITION IMPACT:

POSITION TITLE	PERMANENT/ PROJECT TEMPORARY POSITION	FTE IMPACT	POSITION END DATE
N/A			
TOTAL			

This section should only be completed if a subsequent request will be made to increase or decrease the current position count.

FISCAL IMPACT TO CURRENT BIENNIAL BUDGET: The new fees are proposed for the 2015–2016 biennium, effective June 1, 2015. The proposed fee schedule is expected to raise at least \$150,000 in 2015 and \$300,000 in 2016.

ARE THE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES PLANNED AND BUDGETED? Yes.