



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Phyllis Macleod, Hearing Examiner *JEM*
Ronda Cornforth, Senior Real Estate Specialist, Public Works, Facilities *RJC*
COPIES: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: 15-0676 – Street Vacation No. 124.1351 – July 14, 2015
DATE: June 24, 2015

SUMMARY:

Narrows Marina, LLC has filed a petition to vacate the north 24 feet of the 19th Street West right-of-way, lying westerly of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way and the terminus of City of Tacoma right-of-way, to Narrows Marina for future improvements to pedestrian access ways and boat launch parking.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

N/A.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The proposed street vacation will support the following strategic policy priorities:

- 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:

The owners of Narrows Marina are seeking vacation of a portion of the right-of-way of 19th Street West as it passes along the current parking and access areas on the Narrows Marina site. The Marina property is developed with buildings containing businesses, boat slips, boathouses, parking, and a boat launch. The owners are interested in reconfiguring the access roadway to more clearly define driving, walking, and parking zones. The City of Tacoma and the City of University Place have been engaged in a planning process with the site owners to reach a mutually agreeable vision for further development of the site. The street vacation and access improvements are a part of the master plan being fashioned for the area. The current roadway does not contain curb, gutter, or sidewalk and has no physical separation from the adjacent parking. The new configuration would leave right-of-way adequate for a roadway with two 14-foot lanes and a raised sidewalk on the south side. Landscape features would be used to separate the roadway from the adjacent parking area.

Several neighbors testified against the street vacation. They expressed concerns over the impacts that would occur in the neighborhood if intense development is undertaken at the marina property. They appreciate the current lifestyle in the area and do not want to see high rise buildings constructed that would block existing views. They also expressed distress over the potential for increased traffic in an already difficult pedestrian environment. Residents are uneasy that this could be the first step in a development process that has not been shared with them.

The Hearing Examiner issued a Recommendation supporting approval of the requested street vacation. The Recommendation focused on the criteria for approval of a street vacation request contained in Tacoma Municipal Code § 9.22.070. The neighbors' concerns about undefined future development of the site were not deemed adequate to substantiate denial of a street vacation application that stands on its own and would clearly improve vehicular and pedestrian access to the site.



ISSUE:

Should the Council uphold the Hearing Examiner's Recommendation to approve the requested street vacation?

ALTERNATIVES:

The Council could choose to uphold the Hearing Examiner's Recommendation to approve the requested street vacation or the Council could deny the street vacation request. The proposed street vacation appears to meet the standards for approval of such requests contained in the Tacoma Municipal Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

The requested vacation petition is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.