



TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Tanja Carter, Director, Community & Economic Development (CED)
COPY: Economic Development Committee; Anna Le; Tanja Carter; Carol Wolfe
PRESENTERS: Dierdre Patterson, Business & Economic Development Analyst
SUBJECT: Supporting Small Food and Beverage Business Owners
DATE: April 8, 2025

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this panel is to hear directly from local food and beverage business owners about their experiences navigating Tacoma's built and regulatory environments. These insights will help the City better understand the challenges and opportunities facing small restaurant owners, particularly in regard to permitting, licensing, and interactions with regulatory agencies.

BACKGROUND:

As part of ongoing efforts to support local small businesses, the Economic Development Committee will host a panel discussion with four Tacoma-based food entrepreneurs to learn about their business journeys and their interactions with city permitting and regulatory systems.

Confirmed panelists include:

- Hailey Hernandez, Sidepiece Kitchen
- Buddy Brown, Buddy's Chicken and Waffles
- Phil Panago, Shakabrah
- Jan Parker, Jan Parker Cookery / Reyna Filipina Kitchen

Each panelist represents a unique food business with a variety of ownership models, cuisine types, and geographic locations across Tacoma. The conversation will then focus on two core areas where city government plays a direct or supportive role, the built environment (permitting and physical spaces) and regulatory environment (licensing, inspections, compliance).

ISSUE:

Many small food and beverage business owners face unique challenges in navigating the permitting and regulatory systems required to open and operate a restaurant in Tacoma. This panel brings together four local restaurateurs to share their firsthand experiences with the built and regulatory environments. Their insights will help identify opportunities to streamline city processes, reduce barriers to entry, and improve the overall experience for food entrepreneurs—especially those operating in leased spaces, in historically underserved areas, or with limited upfront capital.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an informational briefing only. No alternatives are being presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an informational briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.



City of Tacoma

Standing Committee Memorandum

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an informational briefing only. No recommendation is being made.