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**SUBJECT:** Eastside Food Equity and Food Innovation Models  
**DATE:** December 10, 2019

**PRESENTATION TYPE:**  
Informational Briefing

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of the presentation is to provide an overview of the current conditions on the Eastside of Tacoma relating to healthy food accessibility and to present options to develop an economic development strategy for committee feedback.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2015 the Tacoma Pierce County prepared a Health Equity assessment based on available data indicating that East Tacoma is one of the areas in Pierce County with barriers to healthy eating. Barriers include income, education, housing, transportation and overall access to healthy food. In addressing this challenge, the City is focusing on its equity indicator on Livability to “improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health, needs assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, for all Tacoma residents.”

In 2015 the East Tacoma Collaborative was formed by an inter-agency group with the vision of a safe, healthy, thriving and equitable neighborhood. In 2016, the Collaborative now led by residents, identified priorities. One priority, healthy food for everyone, resulted in a working group that continues to meet and work on food issues most important to the community.

In 2015 the City began working with the Tacoma Farmers Market to address access to healthy food on the Eastside by launching a Farmers Market in the Salishan neighborhood. The Eastside Farmers Market continues to provide healthy food options on a limited schedule (one-day-per week in the summer) in the McKinley Business District.

In 2017-18 the City of Tacoma partnered with the University of Washington on 27 Livable Cities research projects. A “Food Innovation District for East Tacoma” was one of the projects and resulted in 5 recommendations, one of which was to Strengthen the Local Food Economy and to Celebrate Culinary Diversity.

In 2019, the City Council identified a Food Innovation District as one of their priorities at their February strategic work session.



**ISSUE:**

Barriers to healthy eating are complex; spanning geography, infrastructure, culture, languages, and financial standing. The lack of access to fresh, nutrient-dense food relates to the Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan goal number 1 of livability and goal number 5 of equity and accessibility.

To address healthy food accessibility, staff are exploring various strategies that not only reduce barriers to healthy food access but also improve the economic opportunities for the Eastside residents.

Resources have not been allocated in 2019/20 for Food Innovation Strategies. Staff will seek financial and cross functional resources in 2021/22 to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate a Food Innovation District on the Eastside to include land use, transportation accessibility and site development potential leading to Food Innovation models for public/private investment.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.