

CODE CHANGES

TARGET PUBLIC SAFETY

In response to community feedback, the City of Tacoma is updating the Chronic Nuisance Code (TMC 8.30A) and Business License Code (6B.10). Feedback received was about problem businesses and properties that negatively affect our communities.

The code changes, if adopted, should positively affect communities by encouraging property and business owners to be good neighbors. Strengthening the code will also allow the City to respond faster to concerns and provide more options to the City when businesses and other properties do not comply.

WHAT IS THE CHRONIC NUISANCE CODE?

The Chronic Nuisance Code is intended to fix problems at business and residential properties that have a negative impact on the quality of life, safety, and health of surrounding neighborhoods due to chronic nuisance activities.

CHRONIC NUISANCE ACTIVITY

Chronic nuisance activities can be behaviors occurring on a property such as illegal drug activity, alcohol violations, prostitution or noise code violations.

Proposed changes will add more violations to the definition of a chronic nuisance activity, including drive by shootings, and certain criminal reckless activity, and building code violations.

New: a violation on a neighboring property can be counted against the *problem* property if it is a result of the activity occurring on the problem property.

The full list of proposed chronic nuisance activities can be found at cityoftacoma.org/businesslicense.

CHRONIC NUISANCE PROPERTY

A property can be a “Chronic Nuisance Property” when a number of chronic nuisance activities occur on or near a property within a certain period of time. The City is proposing:

- 3 chronic nuisance activities in 60 days (current code);
- 4 in 6 months;
- 6 in 12 months; or
- 2 search warrants for drug activity in 12 months.

HOW ARE THE PROBLEMS FIXED?

The City is proposing that an owner be required to complete a “Correction Agreement” drafted by City staff. If the owner does not agree and fix the problems, then they may be subject to:

- Permanent cancellation of business license
- Criminal charges that include a fine of up to \$5000 or up to one year in jail

These changes did not impact the City’s ability to correct the on-site issues to the property conditions itself (such as garbage in the yard, or overgrown grass) and charge the cost to the property owner.

KEY CHANGES TO THE BUSINESS LICENSE CODE INCLUDE OPTIONS TO:

- Revoke a business license if the business is subject to a Chronic Nuisance action
- Prohibit a business from reapplying within 12 months after being denied or revoked a license
- Require a conditional business license as needed

Also New: Businesses that have a license denied or revoked three times, are not allowed to apply again.

City Council will review the proposed changes at Study Session on August 14th and adoption of approved changes is expected by September 30, 2018. Any comments regarding any of the proposed changes can be sent to licenseinfo@cityoftacoma.org.

