

CITY OF TACOMA

TEMPORARY HOMELESS CAMP PERMIT PROCESS

Proposed Amendments to TMC 13.05 and
13.06.635 - Temporary Uses

John W. Harrington, Jr.
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Planning Commission Meeting
November 20, 2013

Background

- ❖ **2010 state law authorizes religious organizations to host temporary homeless camps (RCW 36.01.290)**
 - May locate on church owned or controlled property
- ❖ **Cities may impose conditions that protect the public health and safety**
 - A number of camp characteristics and operating standards may be determined by the city

Background (cont'd)

- ❖ **Discretionary regulations examples**
 - **Camp size**
 - **Duration**
 - **Number of camps**
 - **Frequency of use of same property for camps**
 - **Resident make-up**
 - **Camp setbacks from residential uses**
 - **Parking**
 - **Transit access nearby**

Approach

❖ Conduct Public Outreach

- Community based agencies
 - Religious organizations
 - Organizations working with the homeless
 - Neighborhood and business groups
 - City commissions

❖ Coordinate with SME public agencies

- Interdepartmental Team (Police, Fire, Health, Environ Services, Public Works, Power, Water, Solid Waste, N&C Services, PDS)
- Talk with other cities SMEs/visit active camp 4

Approach (cont'd)

- ❖ **Benchmark regulations from other cities**
 - **Comparative spreadsheet**
 - **11 cities**
 - **Wide range of requirements**
 - **Varying review processes/notice reqmt's**

Public Outreach Findings

❖ Common Questions/Concerns

- Human Services

- What is the need for tent camps?
- Is this a long term or short term solution?
- Tent camps are least desired temporary housing and not suited for all
- Need to provide services in camps
- No children in the camps
- Mental illness

Public Outreach Findings

❖ Common Questions/Concerns

- Coordination

- Need for temporary camps to be planned and coordinated by religious organizations
- Timeframe. Extensions allowed?
- Recurrence in same neighborhood
- Minimum camp area
- Move time/transition to new camp

Public Outreach Findings

❖ Common Questions/Concerns

- Regulations

- Timeframe
- Recurrence
- Number of residents
- Homeless food station in S. Tacoma years ago turned into an unregulated homeless camp and was a terrible situation

Public Outreach Findings

❖ Common Questions/Concerns

- Neighborhood

- Fencing
- Setbacks (fire requirements)
- Recurrence
- Number of residents
- Traffic/transit
- Camps can be more welcome if they are seen doing something positive (cleanup)

SME Health/Safety

❖ Camp Quixote/ Tent City 4 observations

- Camp setup
- Resident leaders

❖ City Agencies

- Health
- Fire
- Solid Waste
- Safety/Legal
- Other agencies – standard existing regs/ops



Staff Recommendations

- ❖ Max occupancy: **100 on single large hard surface site or two 50 resident sites**
- ❖ Min camp area: 7,500 sf for first 25 residents; 15,000 sf for **26-50 residents**; **30,000 sf for 100 residents***
- ❖ Max time on ground: 93 days
- ❖ Min time to return to site or neighborhood: 2 years; **1 year for hard surface site**
- ❖ No warrant or background checks req'd

Staff Recommendations

- ❖ Trash pick-up paid for by sponsor church
- ❖ Minimum age: 18 years
- ❖ 6-foot sight obscuring perimeter fence, **may also be constructed of heavy weather-resistant fabric**
- ❖ 14-day public notice

Remaining Issues

- ❖ **Parking scalable (2 per 25 residents?)**
- ❖ **Rodent control required?**
- ❖ **Time to process application – 30 days**
- ❖ **Adjust timeframe for non-residential areas - 180 days**
- ❖ **Calculation of timeframes (start to start)**
- ❖ **Warrant and background checks required?**
- ❖ **Shower facilities requirement**
- ❖ **Tent separation (10 ft too much?)**

Tent City 4 – City of Sammamish



Tent spacing, perimeter fence and boardwalk

14,000 sf living area
4,000 sf support area
78 residents



Mary Queen of Peace Church
Operated by SHARE/WHEEL

Mobile shower/Laundry facility/Latrines



Other Support Facilities



Food service/Pantry

No kitchen operations

Microwave meals and hot beverages

Food eaten in community/rec tent

No food in sleeping tents



Next Steps

Next week: Trip to Tent City

Next week: Trip to Tent City 3

Dec 2: Neighborhoods and Housing Committee

Dec 18: Planning Commission Meeting/Draft Review

Jan 15, 2014: Planning Commission Public Hearing

Feb 5: Planning Commission Review

Feb 19: Planning Commission recommendation

Feb-Apr: City Council consideration

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