



Preliminary Determination of Environmental Nonsignificance

City of Tacoma Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process Proposed Amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code

SEPA File Number: SEP2013-40000215160

TO: All Departments and Agencies with Jurisdiction

SUBJECT: Preliminary Determination of Environmental Nonsignificance

In accordance with WAC 197-11-340, a copy of the Preliminary Determination of Environmental Nonsignificance for the project described below is transmitted:

Applicant: City of Tacoma – Planning and Development Services Department

Proposal:

Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process – proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), Chapter 13.05 Land Use Permit Procedures and Chapter 13.06 Zoning, establishing the permitting process and development standards for temporary homeless camps within the City of Tacoma that are run by religious organizations as provided for in RCW 36.01.290. The proposal would add regulations to protect the public health and safety as well as the residents in such camps. Rules are included for the application and permit review process, camp size, number and frequency of the camps and specific health and fire regulations for up to 100 residents to safely live for up to 93-123 days in a field living environment.

The complete text of the proposed amendments is available from the Planning and Development Services Department at the below address and on the website at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning (and click on “Temporary Homeless Camps”).

Location: City of Tacoma

Lead Agency: City of Tacoma

City Contact: John Harrington
Planning and Development Services Department
747 Market Street, Room 345
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 591-2069

The lead agency for this proposal has made a preliminary determination that this project does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2) (c). This decision was made after review of an environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public upon request. This Preliminary Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2). **Comments must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on January 24, 2014.** The Responsible Official will reconsider the DNS based on timely comments and may retain, modify, or, if significant adverse impacts are likely, withdraw the DNS. **Unless modified by the City, this determination will become final on February 7, 2014.** There is no administrative appeal for this determination. Appeals must be

filed in conjunction with appeals of the adopted amendments to the Growth Management Hearings Board; appeals shall be taken in accordance with procedures and limitations set forth in RCW 43.21C.075 and WAC 242-02. In addition to Growth Management Hearings Board requirements, a copy of the appeal shall be filed with the Planning and Development Services Department, 747 Market Street, Room 345, Tacoma, Washington 98402.

The Puyallup Tribe is notified that this initiates the consultation process.

Responsible Official: Brian Boudet
Position/Title: Acting Director, Planning and Development Services Department

Signature:



SEPA Officer Signature:



Issue Date: December 30, 2013
Comment Deadline: January 24, 2014, 5:00 p.m.

NOTE: The issuance of this Preliminary Determination of Nonsignificance does not constitute project approval. Future project applicants must comply with all other applicable requirements of the City of Tacoma and other agencies with jurisdiction prior to receiving development permits.

- c: via U.S. Mail:
Tacoma Planning and Development Services Department, Reuben McKnight, Shirley Schultz
Tacoma Public School District #10, Pete Wall, 3223 South Union Ave., Tacoma, WA 98409
Nature and Environment Advisory Council, Terry Larson, 808 North Ainsworth Ave., Tacoma, WA 98403
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Bill Sullivan, Natural Resources Director, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, David Duenos, Building Official, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Brandon Reynon, Tribal Historian, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Jeffrey Thomas, TFW Program Director, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Peter Mill, Planning Director, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Lisa A. Brautigam, Environmental Attorney, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Russ Ladley, Tribal Attorney, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Shawn Villegas, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Andrew Stroebel, Land Use Manager, 3009 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404
- c: via E-mail:
Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, SEPA Review Team, sepa@tpchd.org
Port of Tacoma, Jason Jordan, jjordan@portoftacoma.com
Metro Parks, Doug Fraser, dougfr@tacomaparks.com
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Steve Van Slyke, stevev@psc Cleanair.org
Department of Ecology, sepaunit@ecy.wa.gov
Department of Natural Resources, SEPA Center, PO Box 47015, Olympia, WA 98504-7015, sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov
Department of Transportation, Olympia Region Development Services Team, OR-SEPA-REVIEW@wsdot.wa.gov

File: Planning and Development Services

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

SEPA File Number: SEP2013-40000215160

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Temporary Homeless Camp Permitting Process – proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), Chapter 13.05 Land Use Permit Procedures and Chapter 13.06 Zoning, establishing the permitting process and development standards for temporary homeless camps within the City of Tacoma that are run by religious organizations as provided for in RCW 36.01.290.

2. Proponent/applicant:

City of Tacoma – Planning and Development Services Department

3. Contact:

John Harrington
City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services Department
747 Market Street, Room 345
Tacoma, WA 98402-3701
Phone: (253) 279-8950
E-mail: jharring@cityoftacoma.org

4. Date checklist prepared:

December 30, 2013

5. Agency requesting checklist:

City of Tacoma – Planning and Development Services Department

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

January 22, 2014	Planning Commission public hearing
February 19, 2014	Planning Commission recommendation to the City Council
March 18, 2014	City Council study session and public hearing
March 25, 2014	City Council first reading of ordinance
April 1, 2014	City Council final reading of ordinance adopting the proposed regulations
April 13, 2014	Adopted regulations become effective

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

The City will consider adding provisions to the TMC, Chapter 2.09 Fee Code, concerning application fee for Temporary Homeless Camps.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

None.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

None.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

The proposed amendments to the TMC will be adopted by the City Council by ordinance, i.e., through the legislative process.

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site.

The proposed amendments to the TMC would add regulations to protect the public health and safety as well as the residents in temporary homeless camps run by religious organizations. Rules are included for the application and permit review process, camp size, number and frequency of the camps and specific health and fire regulations for up to 100 residents to safely live for up to 93-123 days in a field living environment.

Temporary camps are used to provide shelter, food and hygiene facilities for homeless persons. Camps must be on church owned or controlled land and are temporary use only (site returns to pre-camp use after 93-123 days). There may be 18 to 50 sleeping tents per site, with 1-3 people per tent and up to 12 persons in a group tent. There may be up to 6 support workers in each camp. Administration/security, kitchen, dining facility, and shower tents may also be on the site depending on whether there are adjacent church facilities. Camp residents will be able to work with social workers that can help them get into a better housing situation and other life sustaining services.

12. Location of the Proposal: (Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s).)


The proposed regulations will apply citywide.

13. Assessor Parcel Number:

N/A.

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature:  _____

Name of signee: John Harrington
Position and Agency/Organization: Principal Planner, City of Tacoma
Date Submitted: December 30, 2013

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Water – Municipal water sources will be used. Estimated use is 4-5 gallons per resident per day. Tent or portable structure roof drainage will be infiltrated on site or collected in city storm sewer.

Aesthetics – Camps are required to install perimeter sight-obscuring fencing.

Lighting – There may be some limited outdoor lighting for internal pathways and parking lot lights from church parking lot.

Emissions – Emissions from field kitchen cook stove and potential waste water infiltration.

Noise – Noise would be commensurate with multi-family housing environment. Up to 100 people would be living in tent structures so noise associated with residential noise will not be confined by walls.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

Fire Department and electrical inspectors will mitigate potential fire danger in tents with inspections and physical site development requirements. Camps will have to abide by city noise regulations as set forth in TMC 8.122. Police, fire and ambulance at rate commensurate with general public living in multi-family housing would likely result.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Most sites utilized will be on flat turf areas. The tent structures will likely be placed upon wooden pallets and pathways through the camp covered with plywood boards to minimize damage to the sod. Pallets will allow drainage to flow to grassy area under the pallets.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Electric portable heaters will be used in support function tents, not in sleeping tents.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Temporary use only, site returns to pre-camp use after 93-123 days.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

Camps must be on church owned or controlled land and cannot locate in the shoreline area, critical areas or critical areas buffers.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposal (code amendment) is not site specific. Temporary homeless camps could be located in any zone as long as property is owned or controlled by a religious organization, but would not be allowed in shoreline districts, critical areas, or critical area buffers. There is possible short term use of playfield for camps.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

Temporary use only, site returns to pre-camp use after 93-123 days.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

Camps are required to locate within ¼ mile of transit stops. With the proposed size limit, camps are not expected to significantly increase demands on public transportation.

Code regulations include a number of fire and health standards to safeguard against fire, electrocution, vermin control, food preparation, food storage and refrigeration, and to provide field hygiene facilities (showers, hand washing and hygiene stations and latrines).

Electric, water, refuse/recycling pickup service, sani-can pumping service. Existing electrical and water service at sites. May bring in portable water trailers with potable water. Waste Management garbage and recycling pickup with service fee to the sponsor organization.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Temporary use only, site returns to pre-camp use after 93-123 days

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

State law (RCW 36.01.290) permits religious organizations to operate homeless encampments on church owned or controlled property anywhere in the City of Tacoma. No conflicts have been identified between the proposed amendments to TMC and any local, state, or federal laws, concerning the protection of the environment.