



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Police

CM/ DCM/ ACM: Todd Hileman, City Manager

DATE: September 19, 2017

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding service deliveries in the downtown area.

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BACKGROUND

Food and beverage deliveries in the Downtown Square area typically involve delivery trucks stopping in a traffic lane to load/unload merchandise. As a result other motorists must change lanes to avoid the stopped vehicle, resulting in a temporary road hazard and possible traffic delays. In addition, the stopped delivery vehicles temporarily block the path of motorists trying to back out of parking spaces.

The basic design and infrastructure of the buildings on the Square are primarily responsible for the continued practice of the delivery trucks stopping in the road. Unlike a typical business building, the vast majority of the businesses along the Square have zero lot lines and no off-street parking. There are no readily accessible areas on or near the Square where on-street loading zones could be established. In addition, many of the buildings in this area are not designed to receive deliveries in the rear of the business. Most lack a loading dock designed for a truck, and many lack the physical means for a dolly, hand truck, or similar device to bring packages into the rear of the business. The available parking lots in the area are not convenient to make deliveries to the businesses on the Square. The presence of trucks in these few lots is also disruptive to citizens and patrons of the area businesses.

Stopping in a traffic lane to make commercial deliveries is legal. The Texas Transportation Code authorizes the practice of temporarily stopping in the road to unload merchandise or passengers. However, no legal definition of “temporary” is included in the provision and most Texas cities have not provided enforceable guidelines for temporarily stopping in order to load. For example, the City of Fort Worth mandates the “expeditious loading, unloading, delivery, or pick up of supplies or merchandise,” in its commercial loading zone ordinance.

While there may be some area to explore as it relates to a local definition of “temporarily” or to ascertain a reasonable amount of time required to unload merchandise, such an endeavor would be difficult to establish and even harder to enforce. As it stands, most delivery companies value prompt service and prefer their employees to make their deliveries in a timely manner. An informal survey of restaurants and bars in the Downtown Square area supports the contention that delivery drivers are not only expeditious in their delivery rounds but also tend to schedule their deliveries during nonpeak traffic hours on the Downtown Square. The survey covered six restaurants/bars on each side of the Denton County Courthouse on the

Square. Five out of six restaurants reported that they typically receive deliveries between 5:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Most of the restaurants reported that the estimated duration of deliveries was ten minutes. However, there are instances in which a single delivery driver is scheduled to make deliveries to multiple establishments on the same block which prolongs the duration of delivery up to an estimated 30 minutes.

The most likely of options to reduce the impact of this practice on the flow of traffic would be to enlist the help and cooperation of the local businesses. It appears that the bars/restaurants on the Downtown Square are already working with delivery drivers to cut down on inconveniences by scheduling most deliveries for less-busy traffic times and limiting the amount of time spent on loading and receiving merchandise.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends a continued effort to enlist the help of local business owners in scheduling deliveries at lower traffic times, and actively working to lower/limit the time delivery drivers spend at each business.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

This was a work session item on March 24, 2015, and resulted in no action taken.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELATIONSHIP

The City of Denton's Strategic Plan is an action-oriented road map that will help the City achieve its vision. The foundation for the plan is the five long-term Key Focus Areas (KFA): Organizational Excellence; Public Infrastructure; Economic Development; Safe, Livable, and Family-Friendly Community; and Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship. While individual items may support multiple KFAs, this specific City Council agenda item contributes most directly to the following KFA and goal:

Related Key Focus Area: Safe, Liveable & Family-Friendly Community
Related Goal: 4.2 Seek clean and healthy neighborhoods in Denton

EXHIBITS

1. Agenda Information Sheet
2. PowerPoint Presentation

Respectfully submitted:
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