



## CITY OF TACOMA BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** May 23, 2016

**GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT:** Susan Reehill, Anne James, Dan Hansen, Janet Higbee, David Cook  
Jennifer Halverson Kuehn

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jim Parvey, Emily Watts, Jane Moore, Diane Sheesley

- **Meeting called to order at 5:36 PM**

- **Approval of Minutes**

March minutes approved with no changes.

- **Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

- **Stevens/Tyler/S 66<sup>th</sup> bikeway connections – Diane Sheesley, Public Works**

Diane notified the group that a grant through WSDOT's bike and pedestrian program was applied for. The application involved two construction portions and one design portion. This includes, but is not limited to, pedestrian improvements at the 12<sup>th</sup> and Stevens intersection. As it is not ADA compliant, the curb returns need to be realigned. One member asked whether further traffic calming is needed in this area to slow cars down. Diane noted that the lanes are already narrow (10 feet wide) so as to make drivers feel like there is less room, encouraging them to slow down.

The grant application included a design portion for 19<sup>th</sup> to Wright Street. Diane mentioned that they need more time to study this section. It is unclear whether four lanes are needed, whether the planter strip should stay or be removed, along with other considerations. South of Wright, there are bike accommodations to 66<sup>th</sup>, but 66<sup>th</sup> to Tyler has no ramps onto the sidewalk.

66<sup>th</sup> to S. Tacoma Way is designed to have a 3 foot buffer between the travel lane and bike lane. Diane added that greater striping and candle strips might be added to this section because it travels a rail bridge.

S. Tacoma Way to the Water Ditch Trail is more residential. This is a good place for sharrows to be put in, as it has lower speeds and less traffic volume. It is unclear whether the left turn lane onto S. Tacoma Way will be kept or removed. One member noted that sharrows on S. Tacoma Way might prove ineffective because cars have been known to take over the lane in that area. Another member asked if additional green paint could be added like what was done downtown.

However, Diane explained that this green paint is more for delineating areas of conflict between cars and bikes.

One member noted that the arterial on 66<sup>th</sup> has traffic that feels too fast. Are sharrows enough here to slow down cars or can more traffic calming be added? Additional members mirrored these concerns about sharrows on S. 66<sup>th</sup>. Dave noted that it is an arterial road, but has low traffic volume. However, as Tacoma grows, this could change. Diane explained to the group that S. 66<sup>th</sup> is not a residential road, which means it doesn't fit under the propositions for funding, but it also doesn't have the data to support funding for an arterial type road. Currently, there is no source of funding for road work to put in a bike lane there. The WSDOT Bike/Pedestrian grant that they applied for does not allow paving. One member questioned whether or not the sharrows should be put on at all if the road is in such bad shape and can't be paved, as some of the pot holes are big enough to swallow a tire. Another member mentioned that perhaps the sharrows painted on the road could be brighter or a color that stands out more. While it will be difficult to do work in this area, if a future project is doing paving we can recommend additional traffic calming. Either way, however, this will still be difficult since it is an arterial.

A member asked if North 11<sup>th</sup> and Union to Stevens is an arterial. Diane is unsure and would have to look this up. She noted that the Transportation Master Plan includes all street designations.

It was asked by a member if S. 66<sup>th</sup> could be reclassified as something other than an arterial. Josh Diekmann was already consulted about this and did not think there was a good possibility of this happening.

One member asked what speed limit allows for sharrows on the road. Although uncertain, more than one person believed that sharrows were not allowed on roads above 30mph.

Dave questioned whether the current plan of putting sharrows alone on the road would really be considered seeing the project through to a complete design so as to make it rideable and safe for beginners. The current plan for S. Tacoma Way to Tyler is a complete design, but S. 66<sup>th</sup> still has room for improvement. It was suggested that S. 66<sup>th</sup> should be included in future design plans to get it paved when a similar project is being done close by. Diane noted that there is room to do more on that street and that when funding becomes available, we can start the conversation about making it a complete design. Janet emphasized that she believes the speed should be lower on S. 66<sup>th</sup> but, because it is an arterial, Diane wasn't sure if this would be possible. Additional traffic calming measures, like using the planting strip, might be a possibility. Jim Parvey also noted that perhaps road work could be done there for Storm Water as it doesn't look like there is much of a catch basin. Since it is in the fragile S. Tacoma watershed and rain gardens are helpful traffic calming tools, there may be a future conversation about implementing some Environmental Action Plan goals in this area for rain gardens and increase in the urban canopy.

Diane noted that they hope to hear something back about the grant application this September. If we get it, then funding would hopefully be awarded in 2017 with construction beginning in the spring of 2018. This is due to the weather; delay construction during the winter, while the bids are made available to contractors. In the application, approximately 1.9 million dollars in funds were requested. \$200,000 of which is for the design portion. Diane will email the grant application to the members.

▪ **Update on the Active Transportation Coordinator position – Jim Parvey, OEPS**

Jim explained that he has been working with Public Works on the project description which is now approximately 5 pages long. Jim has met with HR and they will be able to use an existing classification which will speed up the actual hiring process. Once someone is hired, they will most likely stay with the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability through the end of this year and move to Public Works in 2017. For 2016, 30%-50% of their time would be spent with Public

Works so as to build up understanding and knowledge. Jim noted that, as they are in the midst of budgeting, it is unclear whether a second position will be added to help with some of the work. Jim hopes to know if a second person can be hired sometime around August. Advertising for the position should start in about two weeks, but someone will not be officially hired for at least a month.

Jim mentioned that they conducted some informal canvassing but didn't get any strong matches for the position. The job is not yet posted on the website, but Jim can send the link and job posting to each member once it is ready to go. Anything you do to help get good candidates is appreciated, so please feel free to forward it to whomever you think might be interested once Jim sends you the posting.

One member asked what the minimum qualifications are for the position. A four year college degree is required, preferably in a field related to urban planning, public administration, etc. Skills and abilities that are preferred include, but are not limited to: working with diverse audiences, event planning, handling multiple tasks/projects, working effectively on a team, successful grant writing experience, effective presentation/communication skills, an interest in multi-modal transportation and knowledge of regional transportation issues. Dan noted that experience in planning would be helpful for working with design concerns for complete streets, but that it doesn't necessarily need to come with an engineering background.

- **Update on BPTAG new member applications– Dave Cook**

There are three applicants for vacant member positions. Two applicants are from District 4 and one is from District 2. The new members are to be appointed (not selected by the group). There is still no student representative but Leon from Major Taylor is working on recruiting someone.

- **Potential Member Recruitment at neighborhood councils– Dave Cook**

As there are already three applicants for three vacant positions, Dave asked the group if there was any value to be gained from recruiting at Neighborhood Council Meetings. It was decided the group would move forward with the applicants who have already applied and further recruiting is not needed at this time. Jen mentioned that Carol Wolfe is the community council representative and, if needed, can distribute information to all the councils in the future to save us some time.

- **Scott Pierson Trail wayfinding signage– Janet Higbee**

Diane Wiatr had previously asked the group to list some locations on the Scott Pierson Trail that are in need of signage. Janet has composed a list and the group can work to narrow it down and prioritize which locations are most in need.

There are already some signs on the trail, but many have been knocked down. Any new signs should be consistent with the boulevard signs. It was asked who would pay for any new signage. Jim noted that previously signs have been put up through Public Works and economic development of business districts. However, Scott Pierson just skirts many of them. There is some money for wayfinding, but much of it has been spent in the downtown area.

One member advised prioritizing signs to the trail over ones on the trail. Sometimes, though, it is unclear where you need to get off the trail to get to a specific destination. In other locations, it is unclear whether you're even still on the trail. One member asked if there is a record of where all the signage locations were for Scott Pierson. It is believed the signs were put up by WSDOT who should have a record of the locations. Signs pointing people toward the trail would be on City property.

Janet mentioned that even having three large signs with a complete map would be helpful. Paint on the ground could also work for wayfinding in places like 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Some turns off of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave could be better. The bridge to War Memorial Park is not clear and has a narrow sidewalk. One concern is that people don't know where to park their cars to then get on the trail. The pedestrian bridge has limited bike access but no signage to get people to it. There is also no signage on the Gig Harbor side. Using paint for wayfinding might allow the money to go a little further and be used for more locations. Perhaps a small sharrow on a sidewalk would be acceptable. One member mentioned yellow bollards are helpful to indicate the end of a trail. (Bollards: metal posts at the end of a trail that prevent cars from driving through.)

We'll need to clarify the list we currently have of locations for wayfinding, as it isn't always clear if the sign itself would say Left/Right or if it would be facing that direction. It is a great start, though, and covers many locations in need of signage.

The next action for the group is to prioritize the signage locations. Susan has volunteered to email everyone so that a non-quorum sized group can go out together and look at specific locations. Jim noted that the group should figure out how many signs are needed, then ask for funding. Because the City is currently in the budget process, items have to be entered in by June 8<sup>th</sup>. It is unknown how much it costs to put up one sign. The group can also recommend the signage be put up in the future as well, if it can't be done all at once.

▪ **Analysis of short term bicycle network projects suggested by Diane Wiatr– Dan Hansen**

Dan took a closer look at the list of short term bicycled projects that Diane created. The potential projects listed were meant to be simpler to complete in the near future and include primarily using paint to help fill in gaps in the network. Using MoMap and the Transportation Master Plan, Dan compared where they ranked compared to other projects. A project like Washington, between 66<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> down S. Tacoma Way, scores consistently, but others like Stevens and Tyler rank differently in MoMap and the Transportation Master Plan.

Dan noted that Prop 3 and Prop 3A include 2 million dollars a year for bike and pedestrian projects. Some projects, like the ones listed, may not necessarily "score" well when ranked against other projects, but still fill gaps in the network. For example, 6<sup>th</sup> Ave to Sprague could be pretty easily painted as there are no turn lanes.

Dave urged the group to prioritize the list of projects to present to the transportation commission.

A member asked how Dan came up with this list of projects. They were outlined by Diane Wiatr and then Dan did some additional analysis. The blue text includes changes he made like splitting one of the larger projects into two smaller ones. Some of these projects are based on assumptions and might prove to be more complicated than first thought.

Note that South 8<sup>th</sup> should be the street recommended as it is quieter, has better pavement, and greater width.

One member asked if the list was made for the creation of bike lanes only? It is unknown. Although Diane was not specific on what should be put in each location, the projects listed were meant to be simpler projects that could be accomplished in the near future. Some projects may turn out to be more complicated than they look. These projects are meant to be "early wins."

Another member asked how the group is supposed to become aware of upcoming projects in the future. Jim noted that the staff liaison (previously Diane Wiatr) is a good resource. Additionally, someone from Public Works should try to attend regularly to update the group on projects.

Dave noted that eventually he'd like to see a multitude of cross sections for completed networks across Tacoma. University Place has some cross-grids starting and the hope is to have more across the entirety of Tacoma.

The first project on the list is for Washington and S. 66<sup>th</sup>. There have been a few bicycle and pedestrian injuries in the area so it is important to keep it on the list.

One member noted that they are not fond of J St. as there are so many red lights. Eventually the link will run down it, but it is unknown if the street lights can be fixed. It was recommended that perhaps the path could move over a street to I St., but it has uncontrolled crossings. If the path is meant to serve as a bike boulevard for inexperienced riders and families, it might be better to stick with J St. as lights would be safer to stop at.

The proposal to get bike lanes up and down Pearl was thought to be a good idea, but one member observed that redirecting riders to then go down 45<sup>th</sup> or 46<sup>th</sup> might improve the path. It is unclear when the roundabout work in that area is going to occur.

The group agreed that Dave would formalize the list and send it to the Transportation Commission.

▪ **Updates-**

- Yakima-Delin connector trail – Dan Hansen

Dan noted that there was a home for sale on the trail and that after construction was complete, the trail would be removed. It was believed that the homeowner was opposed to keep the trail, but it turns out the issue is with the business adjacent to it. It was asked whether the business could be approached again about keeping the trail but one member commented that they are quite opposed. Another member noted it was doubtful that any negotiations could be made before the easement is up.

- Tacoma's Pipeline Trail grant application – Dan Hansen

The City applied for a grant for the Pipeline Trail. Dan mentioned that it looked like the application took the suggestions and recommendations of BPTAG and included them. He believes the City has a strong chance of getting the grant.

- Pierce County's Foothills Trail Construction – Dan Hansen

Dan noted that the section of the trail from South Prairie to Buckley is to be connected. All of the funding is there and the groundbreaking will be June 7<sup>th</sup>. When the trail is complete it will be around 20 miles long.

▪ **Topics for June and Good of the Order – All**

- Send Dave and Dan any items you would like added to the next meeting's Agenda.

▪ **Meeting Adjourned at 7:38 pm.**