



CITY OF TACOMA BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES

DATE: November 23, 2015

GROUP MEMBERS

PRESENT: Dave Cook, Kris Symer, Dan Hansen, Janet Higbee, Matt Stevens, Ben Storrar, Jennifer Halverson Kuehn, Susan Rehill, Brandi Riddle

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill Elliot, Jane Moore, Hannah Miner, Diane Wiatr, Liz Kaster

- **Meeting called to order at 5:33 PM**

Dave welcomed the group and facilitated the ice-breaker regarding the Thanksgiving holiday.

- **Approval of Minutes**

- **Public Comment**

Liz Kaster, manager of the Puyallup Watershed Initiative's Active Transportation Community of Interest, asked for support for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) locally. As background, Liz passed around copies of a report about walking and bicycling and childhood safety in Tacoma.

Three students were hit by cars while walking to school in the first week of October. After digging into the data, Liz discovered that every 8 days a child is hit while walking or bicycling in Tacoma. This is an important equity issue and Liz is here presenting to the BPTAG asking for support for funding from the Tacoma City Council.

Tacoma needs comprehensive SRTS programs that address the 6 E's: Education, Encouragement, Evaluation, Enforcement, Engineering, and Equity. This needs to be address by the city in a data-driven way, rather than a system that is driven by complaints.

Tacoma City Council is meeting tomorrow to discuss the proposal for the mid-biennium budget adjustment. There is support for asking Tacoma City Council to put \$50,000 towards building comprehensive SRTS plan. This plan would seek to bring together partners from schools, Tacoma School Board, and the community to develop a plan to implement comprehensive SRTS programming city-wide.

Transportation Commission co-chair Jane Moore just signed a letter to the City Council asking for funding for SRTS. Liz is asking for BPTAG to produce and sign a letter supporting the Transportation Commission's letter.

Kris and Matt asked questions about how this plan would be funded beyond the plan.

Diane spoke about the new ballot initiatives, Props 3 and A, that would bring funding into the City. There is also potential for speed cameras in school zones. The City of Seattle earns \$14 million in revenue each year from their speed camera program. Additionally, the State of Washington has included in their transportation budget more money for SRTS than ever before. A Grant match for those funds is essential. City funding could be leveraged indeed.

Jennifer asked if Liz had spoken to the TPD and TPS Boards -- she has not done this yet.

The goal is to have consensus on moving forward on this decision before the end of the meeting because of the Tacoma City Council meeting tomorrow. Kris suggested that everyone take a minute to read the letter from the Transportation Commission.

Dan made a comment about the value of having a plan for when grants come up. Having a document and a project list and knowing how it matches up with grant criteria helps to make the City more prepared and competitive.

The group approved their draft letter and agreed it should be sent to the Tacoma City Council.

- **I-5, JBLM Vicinity – Congestion Relief – Bill Eliot, WSDOT**

I-5 in the vicinity of JBLM has become notorious for traffic congestion. This stretch of I5 has worse congestion than the Fife and Tacoma Dome sections. The goal of this plan for congestion relief is to improve the mobility of freight and people while addressing congestion and maintaining access to the community and military destinations.

I-5 literally passes through JBLM—this is a unique situation. I-5 is located on some military land, made possible by an easement. The current problem is there are simply too many vehicles trying to use the roadway at the same time. Between 1986 and 2006 there was a 52,000 increase in vehicles per day. This is due in part to the increase in population in Thurston and Pierce Counties. The last through lanes in I-5 were added in 1975. JBLM is a significant factor as well. On a given day, 100,000 people visit the base. 30,000 live on the base, with an average of 70,000 people traveling to the base daily.

Additionally, there are 9 closely spaced interchanges within 11 miles. This is a higher density than usually desired and leads to high higher levels of entering and exiting during peak hours. The lack of parallel roads leads to people using the interstate for many short trips for lack of better alternatives.

Using models, the planning team projects that in 2040, if nothing is done to mitigate traffic, the travel time for the southbound in a 16 miles section would increase to 65 minutes. The travel time for the northbound lanes will increase to 70 minutes.

Finally, this is a truck and freight corridor, with some of the highest volumes along the entirety of I-5 between Olympia and Fife.

This congestion plan began with a feasibility study in 2013, moving into developing and analyzing alternatives in 2014. Initially, 180-185 discreet options were developed to alleviate congestion—these options included increasing transit, transportation demand management, and local street improvements on both JBLM and surrounding jurisdictions. This Comprehensive Multi-Modal analysis extended from Yelm to Steilacoom. These options were put through a screening process to narrow the field. They were then scored to develop alternative packages that were layered and put through a modeling process.

The plan also includes a future phase because the current plan, when modeled, only indicates that it will be beneficial for the next 15 years. WSDOT tries to plan for 20 years of beneficial outcomes so they built in an additional phase when it becomes necessary.

The multi-modal piece of the plan includes developing the Gravelly Lake Connector to connect Tillicum and Woodbrooke to Lakewood using a right of way on Tacoma Golf and Country Club property and part of Sound Transit's property. This will connect to the Tillicum neighborhood using existing bike lanes and sidewalks.

There will be a shared use path on the Lewis Main side which will then switch to the Lewis North side to avoid easement impacts on base. Existing sidewalks and bike lanes in Dupont will create the full connection.

This plan is proposed to be constructed in two phases, the first connecting Gravelly to the JBLM's main gate, and the second connecting the Main Gate to Dupont. This will be completed in 2025. The group is working on right of way acquisition for the first phase now. It is estimated that this entire project will cost about \$495 million.

Dave spoke about the connections over the I-5. These bridges over I-5 are dangerous for those traveling by bike and foot. He asked that Bill be pro-active now rather than during the design phase. Bill has worked with TWBC about interchanges as well as the Coalition for Active Transportation.

Janet also mentioned the need for sound buffers from I-5 as well.

Diane, Kris, and Dave will be added to the mailing list to be kept up to date on this project. Bill will likely come back to this group at a later date with more opportunities for input.

▪ **Props 3 and A Update**— Diane Wiatr

Props 3 and A were on the ballot. The first count showed that Prop A clearly passed, but Prop 3 was down by four votes as of November 3. People have been seeking to verify votes by following up on bad signatures to make Prop 3 a positive. There needs to be an official vote count declared tomorrow by Pierce County Auditor.

City Staff will join the BPTAG in December to discuss what this means for pedestrian and bicycling funding in Tacoma. The Transportation Commission will get a more comprehensive presentation because they will likely disseminate these funds. Prop 3 creates \$133 million in revenue over ten years, Prop A \$35 million. If BPTAG members read through the "Where as" section of both propositions, there are more details. Both mention bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the City of Tacoma.

This is the first time in a long time that there has been dedicated and reliable funding for roads in Tacoma.

▪ **Shared Use Path Chapter of the Design Manual**— Diane Wiatr

The City of Tacoma updated their outdated design manual. The version before this update was so old it did not include bike lanes.

This new design manual includes Green Roads, bikeways, and stormwater. It is generally more "green" and current. Additionally, it will not be updated annually because as it is used it will become more clear what is missing and what doesn't work.

It is too late for comments now, but it will be up for comments again next year. Diane was very engaged in this update because she was concerned that this would reflect only the bare minimum.

The Right of Way Design Guide is available online here:

<http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/enviro/DesignManual.pdf>

This Guide is far more progressive than before and it references the NACTO design guide.

▪ **Report back on angled parking in Proctor and City-wide Policy Change**— Diane Wiatr

Dave spoke about the lack of back angled parking in Proctor. He sent a letter to Transportation Commission and spoke with Josh Diekmann.

Focusing on eye contact and being able to see a driver makes everyone feel safer. Kids don't have the same access to the street. Pedestrians load the rear.

The City didn't think about asking a developer to consider designing front-in angle parking differently early enough, and now it's too late. Also, the style of angle parking used on the blocks around Proctor wouldn't match with new back-in angle parking.

Diane was asked by Kurtis Kingsolver if angle parking is standard practice. He stated that it's not something to be changed in policy—just something that was missed in this instance.

This is a moment of change and the strong and clear voice in Dave's letter will go far in the City doing the right thing in the future.

Kris wants to see this institutionalized. It's clearly an enforcement issue. Diane recommends that Kris invites Josh Diekmann to the BPTAG meeting to speak to those questions and wants to hear and see next steps.

Jane spoke about asking for accountability and said that might be a good idea because they were chastised at a Transportation Commission meeting. Josh can come and present when he knows what they are changing.

▪ **Bike/ped detour between Thompson and G. St. Follow-up**— Kris Symer

The "goat path" detour near Lincoln High School is paved but will not persist once construction is over. We are against that as a group.

BPTAG would like to see a parcel map – Kris will request this from Josh Diekmann. There is a question about where WSDOT ROW is.

This could warrant a field trip to see if there is an alternative once BPTAG has more information. The group seemed interested in a field trip.

▪ **Updates**— Diane Wiatr

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Funding for Bike/Ped projects: Federal transportation funding is passed through PSRC—Kitsap, Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties. PSRC has CMAQ funds that frequently fund bike/pedestrian work. 10% of CMAQ funds are dedicated to Active Transportation Projects.

STP—Surface Transportation Program funds: 50% is allocated county-wide and the other 50% is grant proposals (regional connectors—like Water Flume Line Trail that serves/connects a regional center, etc.).

PSRC has new cheat sheets for bike and pedestrian projects. The idea is to give engineers a baseline of understanding to allow everyone to read from the same page and to score things differently. As an example, more points are awarded if you say a road is a bike facility, but sometimes sharrows are painted on a road and the very minimum is done. This is going to impact all four counties, not just Pierce. Diane is hopeful that this will have positive effects in the spring when they rate projects.

Diane gave an update on the Pierce County Bike Map. Questions included: where are new bike facilities, how can the map be most legible, and could Tacoma be on one side? Once there is a first draft done, Shawn will be invited to present to the group.

Follow-up items:

- Email Shawn Bike Swap dates to plan backward for bike map.
- Zach is a regional trail map guru.
- Bikes vs Cars—Documentary and discussion with Kristina Walker from DTOG
- Yuletide Ride—December 7

This is Hannah's last official meeting with the BPTAG group.

▪ **Meeting Adjourned**