



City of Tacoma  
Community and Economic Development Department  
Planning and Development Services Department

May 1, 2013

T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
747 Market Street, Room 1200  
Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: Amtrak Station Relocation Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations

Dear Mr. Broadnax,

On behalf of the Amtrak Station Relocation Citizens Advisory Committee I am pleased to transmit our recommendations to you and the Mayor.

Background: The Advisory Committee was formed jointly by the directors of your Department of Community and Economic Development and Department of Planning and Development Services to review the proposed relocation of the Amtrak train station, currently located at 1001 Puyallup Avenue, to the Freighthouse Square mixed use/retail facility at 2501 East 'D' Street. Whereas the City was already engaged in the development of a sub-area plan for the Dome District it had already identified potential conflicts of the station relocation proposal with the District goals, including blocking of East 'C' and 'D' Streets during train stops and designating surface parking in the District center for train users as top concerns. One of the Committee's goals was to identify issues potentially in conflict with the long-term goals of the Dome District (2008) and make recommendations relevant to the probable siting of the Amtrak Station at Freighthouse Square. In approaching this task the Committee tended towards a holistic approach since many of the issues, such as parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, way finding, and the District's environmental character are actually inter-related and require different responses depending on the time of day and other events taking place in the District.

The Advisory Committee was comprised of 15 stakeholders from local government agencies, community leaders and business owners within the District. Meetings were chaired by Don Erickson, Tacoma Planning Commission Chair with assistance from Ian Munce and Cheri Gibbons of the Planning and Development Services Department, and facilitated by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The meetings were open to the public and attended by additional stakeholders in the community who provided valuable support.

The Committee met six times between February 25<sup>th</sup> and April 29<sup>th</sup> of this year. Background information was reviewed, including history of the issues and the development of the informal proposal by Washington State Department of Transportation. Presentations were made by the WSDOT, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Tacoma Planning and Development Services and the American Institute of Architects. These included an update on the Point Defiance Bypass by WSDOT, a brief history of planning in the Dome District by the City, Principles of Transit Oriented Development by Pierce Transit, and the Ten Principles of Livable Communities by the AIA SW.

Recommendations: Based on group discussions at the Committee's meetings twenty-five initial recommendations were made, organized in four broad categories consistent with the long-term goals of the District. These areas of concern were Parking, Traffic Circulation, Urban Design and Station Design. At its next to last meeting members of the Committee were asked to narrow these initial recommendations down to a shorter list by voting on them. The final list includes eleven recommendations. These are listed below in the priority the Committee gave them.

1. Blockage of East "C" and East "D" Streets by either trains, train-related safety gates, safety arms, or signaling devices must only occur when trains are passing to facilitate improved pedestrian and vehicular north-south circulation throughout the District. Because of the increased length of the Amtrak trains placing the station platform onto the trestle to the east should also be considered.

2. Amtrak and WSDOT should continue to work with the City and the Federal Rail Administration on the application to create a “quiet zone” throughout the “core” area of the District.
3. New off-street parking should not be allowed to be located on “core” pedestrian-oriented streets (see Exhibit 1, attached) unless fully enclosed within a mixed-use structure with at least the first 40 feet (measured perpendicular to the street property line) reserved for retail and/or service type uses.
4. Preference should be given to relocating the Amtrak station to Freighthouse Square if off-street parking, street blockage, and facility issues can be resolved.
5. Install traffic calming devices such as landscaped medians, widened sidewalks, bulbed curb-crossings, etc. on Puyallup Avenue between Hwy 705 on the west and East “G” Street on the east to slow vehicular traffic speed in this major east-west corridor.
6. All-day surface parking should be located outside of the pedestrian “core” area of the Dome District shown on Exhibit 1 in the attached report.
7. The Amtrak station should be designed as an integral part of Freighthouse Square with its primary ingress and egress through the central concourse of the building when FHS is open, rather than through separate exterior entrances/exits.
8. Any on-street short-term parking spaces lost for commuter or train “drop-off/pick-up” zones should be replaced in the immediate area.
9. Off-street parking within the District should not be “free” since in reality it is not and when “free” it distorts the market in terms of supply and demand.
10. WSDOT should provide its longer-term Amtrak train-users off-street parking outside of the “core” area of the Dome District, such as under Hwy 705, or at the mattress factory site in the block between Puyallup Avenue and E 25<sup>th</sup> Street, east of E “G” Street near the edge of the “core” area.
11. Waiting areas in the new station should be informative not only regarding Amtrak scheduling and destinations, but also regarding Tacoma and its multiple assets including its many educational, employment, recreational, and cultural facilities. Short-term baggage storage lockers should be provided to facilitate visitors wishing to venture out from the station.

Also, I have attached for your consideration the Committee’s Report and Recommendations document which includes the original twenty-five issues and recommendations and the agencies most likely associated with each of them.

In closing, the Advisory Committee believes relocating the Amtrak station to Freighthouse Square provides considerable potential benefits to the community, not the least of which is enhancing Tacoma’s unique multi-modal transportation center. Connecting Amtrak with both the LINK light-rail and Pierce Transit, will facilitate tourism in Tacoma making downtown, University of Washington Tacoma, Tacoma Art Museum, and the Museum of Glass readily accessible to visitors. Similarly, it will be more accessible to the greater community.

Additionally, although not listed as a specific design related recommendation the Advisory Committee overwhelmingly requested that it have the opportunity to continue to be involved in providing community oversight to the City of the Amtrak station design as it progresses from schematic to preliminary and then to final design. The AIA SW chapter has again offered to assist us in this effort.

Letter to T. C. Broadnax  
Amtrak Station Relocation Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations  
Page 3

Thank you in advance for giving serious consideration to our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald K. Erickson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donald K. Erickson, AICP, Chair  
Amtrak Station Relocation Citizen's Advisory Committee

cc: Ricardo Noguera, Director, Community and Economic Development Department  
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services Department

