

**Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force**  
Virtual meeting  
Meeting #27 –August 12, 2021, 10:30am

**Task Force Members in attendance:** Layne Alfonso, Clinton Brink, Jim Collins, Jim Dugan, Michael R. Fast, Ben Ferguson, Jessica Gamble, Jason Gauthier, Joshua Jorgensen, Mandy McGill, Claude Remy, Chuck Sundsmo, John Wolters

**Excused:** Justin Gorocho, Evan Mann

**10:34 AM: Welcome**

**10:35 AM: Approval of July 8 meeting minutes**

Mandy McGill moved, Jason Gauthier seconded. Motion approved.

**10:36 AM: New items of interest**

- Terry Forslund provided updates on in-person assistance in TMB, new phone system for credit card payment, virtual meetings with staff, and a new list of City-issued cell phone numbers available on website.
- Jim Dugan met with Councilmember Ushka and discussed many current items. Councilmember Ushka expressed appreciation for the work of the TPATF.

**10:42 AM: Fee in Lieu check in**

Corey Newton appreciated these conversations. As a natural change agent, he wanted to implement programs like this to advance infrastructural needs in the community. There had been discussions with the City of Puyallup and there were challenges. Both cities were working to advance the conversation. The program would likely take longer to implement. The two legal departments would need to discuss specifics and there could be legislative changes. Cost-wise, costs for the City of Puyallup were inexpensive but the City of Tacoma would not be able to do the same on a similar cost basis.

Jim Dugan asked for schedule and that the TPATF be provided with a plan.

Corey Newton responded that the plan would be possibly a legislative request; we were at a data-collecting stage only.

Ben Ferguson reinforced that we were focused on the problem – sidewalks to nowhere. They needed to be eliminated. There may be an intermediate step could get rid of them and create something functional.

Corey Newton acknowledged it was a tough problem. There was a need to provide equitable infrastructure. End goal was to solve the infrastructure problem; this was just a part of it.

Ben Ferguson stated that the infrastructure problem was not the same as the sidewalks to nowhere. He would argue that the sidewalks to nowhere looked like infrastructure but were not infrastructure because no one was using those sidewalk. He asked for an intermediate step.

Corey Newton asked both sides to keep an open mind. The sidewalks are just part of a bigger picture.

Jim Dugan agreed this was a multi-point issues and sidewalks to nowhere was only one point. He additionally mentioned Downing Elementary School and safe routes for schools.

Jason Gauthier asked about desirable changes in RCW to better facilitate the programs.

Corey Newton stated there was a current fee-in-lieu program but it was limited to the immediate area, not a larger area of use. So the question was how the City could use the funds in other areas.

Jim Dugan requested Steve Victor to come back at the next meeting after further analysis was complete.

### **10:57 AM: More off-site discussion**

Corey Newton presented PowerPoint 1.

Questions and Comments:

Jim Dugan commented on TPS doing fee in lieu with City, how to pay for permits, and asking the kind of questions that would matter most based on that tutorial to either further explore or any low hanging fruit that's worth investigating.

Ben Ferguson had clarifying questions:

- The City had non-conforming that as long as it was not super bad, we'd let it live, and if it was tragic, we'd have to fully replace it. It was an important thing to communicate so the world knows the place.
- Where did the standards for what's non-conforming but allowed to live come from? Was it a City of Tacoma's interpretation of federal requirement?
- For curb ramp, what defined the middle ground and how achievable was it?

Chris Johnson: requirements were from the Department of Justice and staff would use their own expertise to impart reasonableness.

Ben Ferguson: It would be good to have a board of civil engineers review and provide input about the requirements.

Mike Fast: 100% of the ramp cost was from developers. It's necessary to find a different way to pay for the other ramps to relieve the burden from developers.

Mandy McGill: Requested for the document from the Department of Justice. It would be important to have it as reference.

Ben Ferguson: Whenever opinion was involved in where the safety line is drawn, it may be worth to discuss with people other than City staff. It was different staff because it was not City's money being spent.

Mike Fast: For ramps that were lose to meeting the requirements, could they be modified instead of removed and replace?

Chris Johnson: The City did come up with a way to mitigate and fend off potential future issues with Department of Justice, to provide safety and equity. Responsibility would fall to the local jurisdiction; litigation would go to the jurisdiction.

Kurtis Kingsolver: Liked the idea of having external engineers look at the process. But when a lawsuit happened, it would be the City's/taxpayers money being spent. The City was in process of getting contract with sidewalk cutter to see how it might work to retro existing ramps.

John Wolters: No one was recommending a policy that would not meet legal requirements. The goal was to prioritize health, safety, and general welfare of the public. It was important to be able to do things without inconvenience or legal consequences. Conversations were necessary.

Chris Johnson: Despite the bureaucratic and dogmatic nature, we were constantly working to improve and provide reasonableness.

**11:55 AM: Final comments**

Jim Dugan: Be sure to look at Jim's best efforts to bucket items and provide feedback to Lynda.

**11:58 AM: Adjourned**