



OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS - SIDEWALK

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force

September 9, 2021

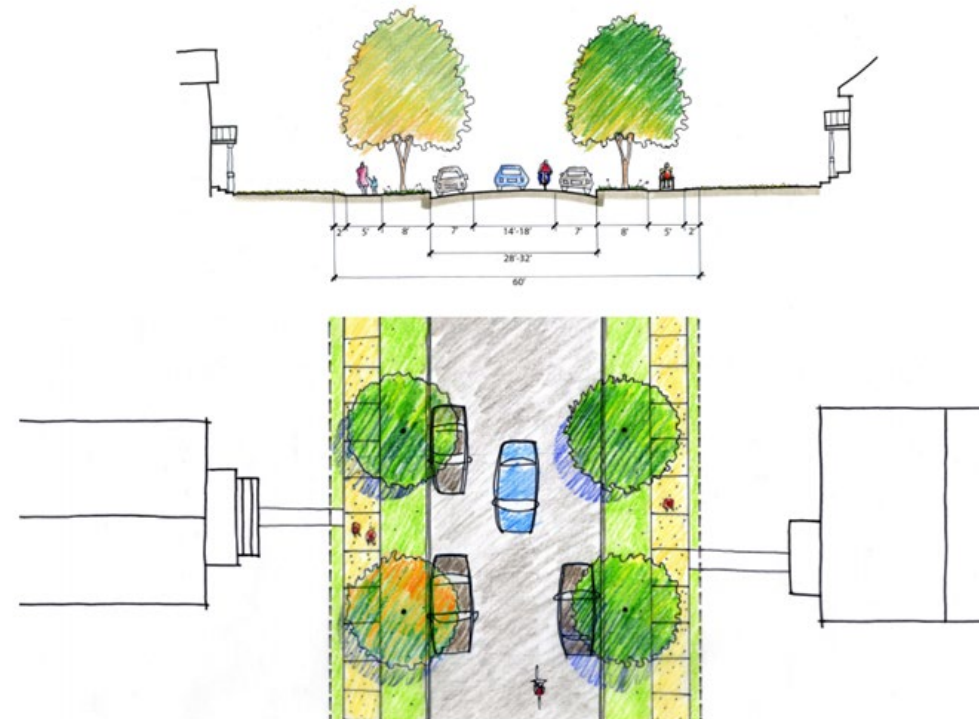




OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS

- Curb Ramps
- **Sidewalks**
- Driveways
- Parking
- Alley Paving
- Street Restoration
- New Services (Sewer, Water, Power)
- Trees and Landscaping
- Retaining Walls
- Environmental
 - Stormwater
 - Critical Areas
 - Solid Waste

Figure 2.2: Standard Residential Street



Drawings are for illustrative purposes only.

● ● ● BACKGROUND

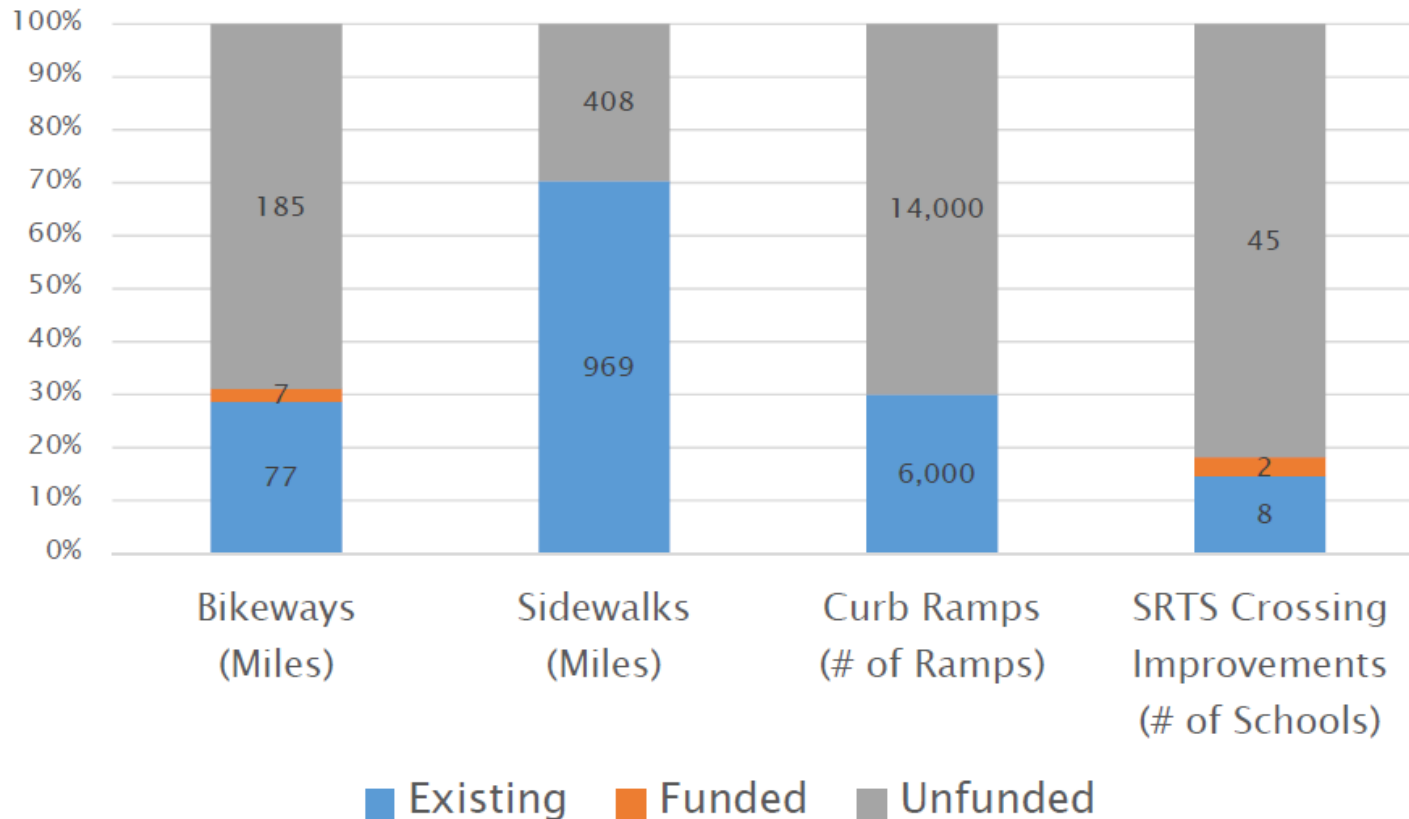


- Task Force prioritized off-site improvements topic for 2021
- In June, July, and August 2021 meetings, Task Force members highlighted the need to discuss sidewalks
- Additional background from past discussions can be found at the [Task Force's agendas and minutes website](#)

● ● ● BACKGROUND



How complete is Tacoma's active transportation network?



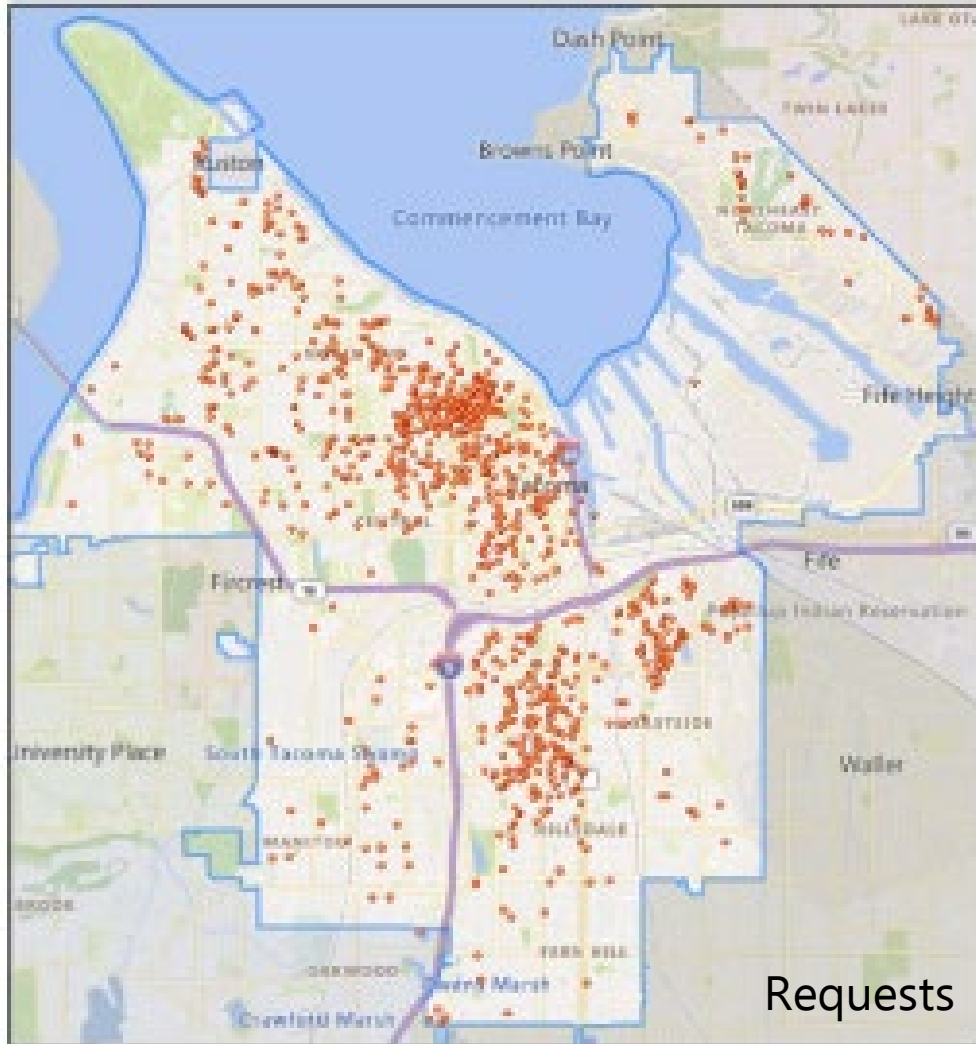
Average Annual Progress
 3 miles of new bikeways/year
 0.5 miles of city-built new sidewalk
 168 new curb ramps
 \$350,000 for Safe Routes to School

Estimated Time to Network Completion at Current Pace
 143 years

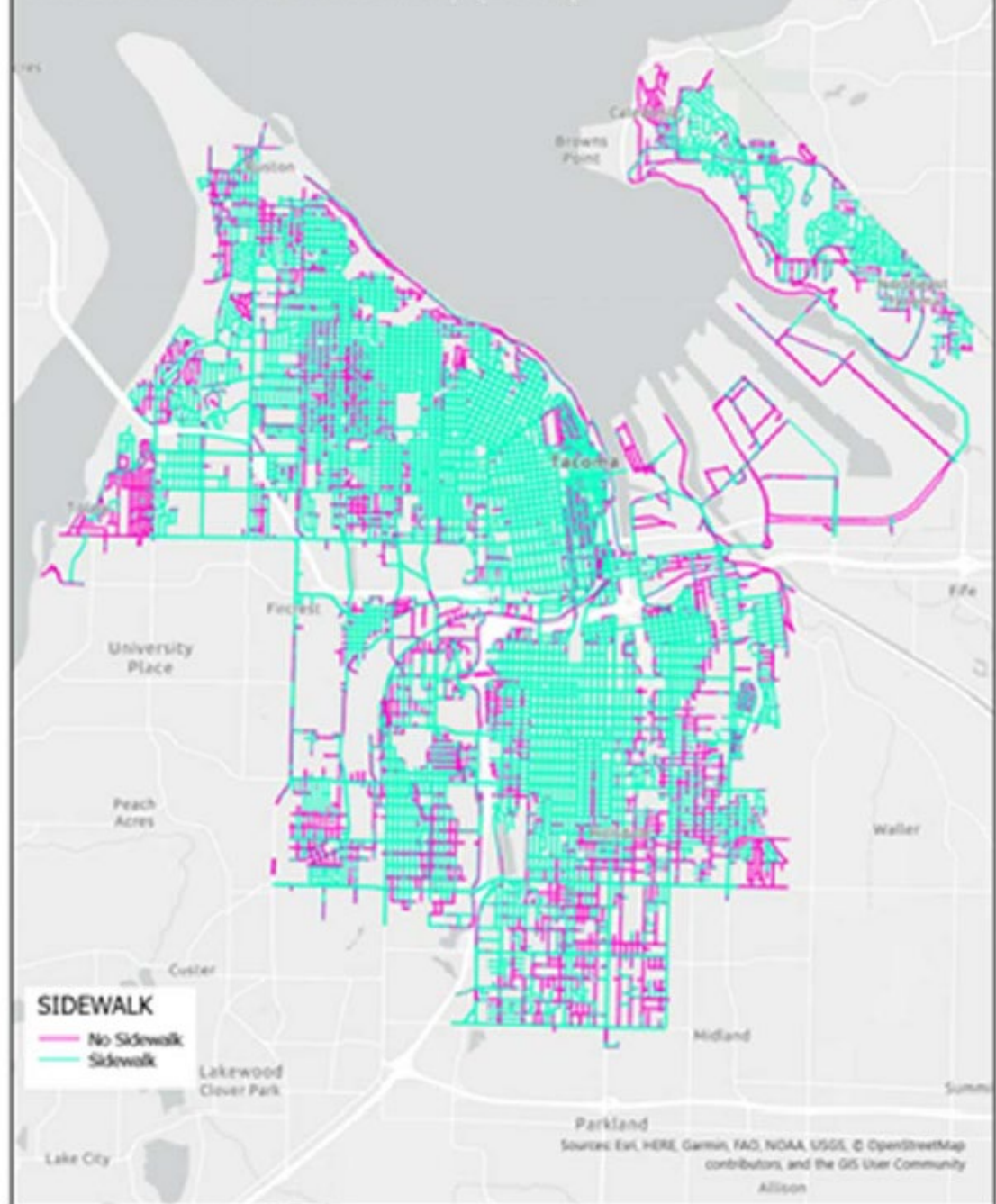
Bicycle & Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group



Presented on August 24, 2021



Tacoma Sidewalk Inventory (2015)

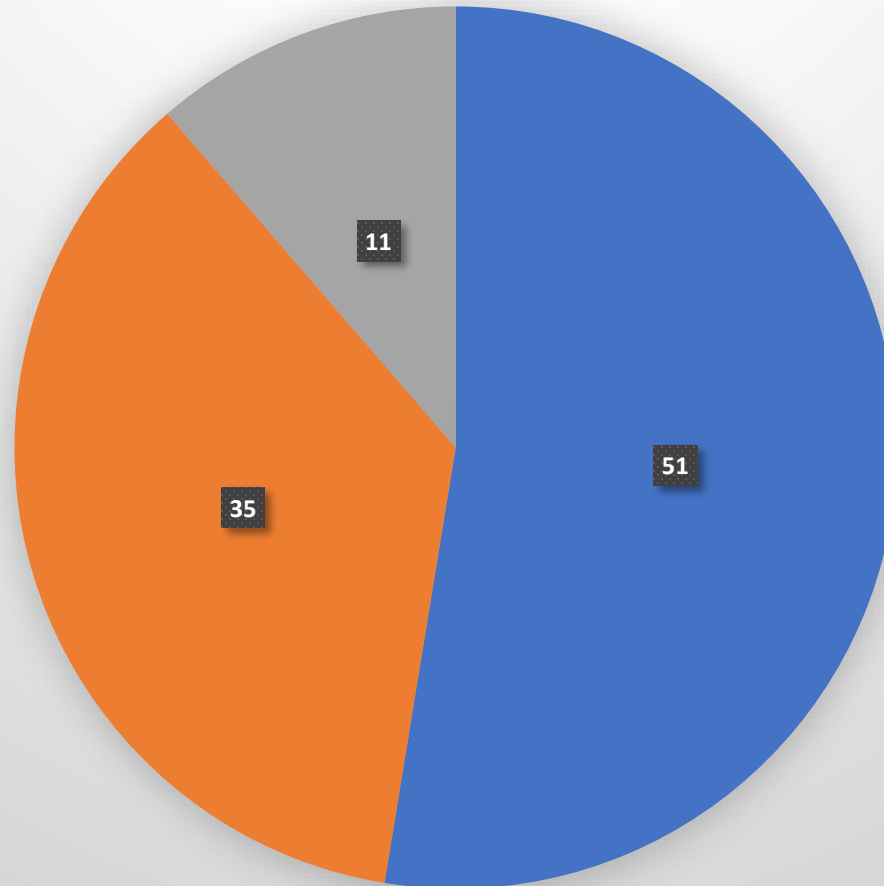


2019 SFR Sidewalk Required



Sidewalk

■ No ■ Yes ■ Remove & Replace





ISSUES



Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force members identified the following concerns with off-site improvements related to sidewalks:

- Policy disagreement with sidewalk requirements, “sidewalks to nowhere”
- Private developer/property owner responsibility to fund sidewalk infrastructure
- ADA requirements that balloon cost of sidewalk infrastructure, such as curb ramps
- Built environment considerations, cost of replacing existing imperfect infrastructure might be disproportionate to the project
- Other?



● ● ● SIDEWALKS BY PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT



- Owners responsible for damaged and defective
- New Construction
- Remodel/TI/Change of Use
[Flowchart-for-off-site-improvements.pdf](#)



● ● ● PREDICTABILITY - IS SIDEWALK REQUIRED?

- Construct if it doesn't exist adjacent to site. "Frontage Improvements".
- Off-site evaluation starts with Safety
 - Is it on a corner?
 - Does it already have sidewalk and curb ramps adjacent? Are they adequate?
 - Is it near a School, Bus Stop or Mixed-Use Center?
 - Is it adjacent to the site or on the block? Is it within **XX feet** of the site?
 - Is there developable land near the site with the potential to add more sidewalk?
 - Is there a good reason not to require sidewalk? Is it feasible?
 - Is it an established street of adequate width? Does it have curb and gutter?



Tacoma Municipal Code 2.19.040 Off-site improvements.

D. Development Standards: All new off-site Improvements, where required, shall conform to the Public Works Department Standards and be constructed in accordance with the Public Works Department Design Manual and the City of Tacoma Surface Water Management Manual (COTSWMM). When a lot adjoins an alley or street intersection, improvements shall also be installed at the alley or street intersection. Alleys shall be improved to City of Tacoma standards when any access to the site is provided from the alley.

- 1. Single Family and Two Family dwellings: New Single Family or Two Family Dwelling buildings require the development of cement concrete curb and gutter, paving, and drainage of all dedicated streets along the lot frontages, except, in cases where the topography or other conditions make it impractical. Sidewalks shall be required when any of the following criteria applies:
 - a. Sidewalks exist on the site, or sites, adjacent to the site to be built on, or*
 - b. Sidewalks exist on the majority of the developed sites in the area, or*
 - c. There is sufficient undeveloped property in the street frontages on both sides of the street that, when developed either by itself or when added to lot frontages already containing sidewalks, the majority of the street frontages on both sides of the street will have sidewalks, or*
 - d. The development involves more than one site and warrants sidewalks as part of the overall development.**

● ● ● DISCUSSION: IS SIDEWALK REQUIRED?



- New Development
 - Recommendations? What constitutes a sidewalk to nowhere? Are there boundaries that define it for you?
- Remodels/Alterations/Change of Use
 - Built to some “standard” at the time...IBC doesn’t require perfection or complete reconstruction for existing structures
 - What about 4 feet or 6 feet walks and 2% < cross slopes <4% off or running slopes > 5% on existing sidewalk?
 - Where does damage/defective come in for a Tenant Improvement/Remodel with no exterior work?
- Other?



SIDEWALKS TO SOMEWHERE



The Tacoma City Council has set policy to require sidewalk infrastructure to achieve the following goals:

- Separate people from traffic (provide refuge)
 - Distracted drivers and walkers have caused an increase in fatalities since 2009
 - Vision Zero Goal – adopted in February of 2020 – Eliminate collisions causing serious injury or death by 2035.
- Safer intermodal connectedness and identified access to transit.
- Gathering place outside of traffic
- Climate goals – reduces vehicle trips
- Increase Home Value - Communities have ratings on Walkability.
- Establishes the road grade for the future.



DISCUSSION: SIDEWALKS TO SOMEWHERE

Alternatives for consideration:

- Review policy options and issue a formal policy recommendation to Tacoma City Council
- [In progress] advocate for an alternative “fee in lieu” program
- Civil Engineer expert discussion recommended by Task Force members at 8/12 meeting around existing infrastructure evaluation criteria to determine replacement.
- Other ideas?

• • • WHO PAYS FOR SIDEWALK?



- Washington State law, as well as the Tacoma Municipal Code, places the responsibility for sidewalk repairs on the private property owner.
- This is the standard practice for local municipalities in Washington state.
- If you have any questions about this aspect of sidewalk regulations, please take a look at Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 35.69 and Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 9.17 and TMC 10.18 and 10.20.

LAST MEETING:

● ● ● EXISTING CURB RAMP EVALUATION CRITERIA



Existing curb ramp barriers—if one or more of these barriers exist, a new curb ramp is required:

- A curb ramp with a longitudinal slope greater than 10%; or
- A curb ramp cross-slope exceeding the gutter slope; or
- A curb ramp with no turning space/landing.; or
- Vertical surface discontinuities greater than 1/2 inch.

Existing curb ramp barriers—if more than two (2) barriers exist, a new curb ramp is required:

- A longitudinal slope greater than 8.3%, but less than or equal to 10%.
- Non-compliant turning space/landing (running and/or cross-slope greater than 2%)
- Change in level (not flush) at grade breaks.
- Non-compliant or missing detectable warning
- Ramp or turning space/landing are cracked, broken, or damaged
- Out of alignment with opposing curb ramp (more than 1/2 ramp width from opposing ramp)

NOTE: Every required curb ramp shall have an existing opposing curb ramp that meets the Existing Curb Ramp Evaluation Criteria or a new curb ramp shall be constructed.

DISCUSSION: ADA RAMPS



Alternatives for consideration:

- Advocate for funding to be allocated to assist with cost of ADA requirements
- Evaluate existing ramp criteria for replacement
 - Civil Engineer expert discussion recommended by Task Force members at 8/12 meeting around existing infrastructure evaluation criteria to determine replacement.
- Other ideas?

WHO PAYS FOR SIDEWALK?



- Private Development
- Homeowners
 - Voluntarily or Involuntary (Enforcement)
 - Local Improvement District Assessments
- City Funds
 - Grants
 - Real Estate Excise Tax
 - Streets Initiatives
- Utilities – replaced



DISCUSSION: WHO PAYS FOR SIDEWALKS?



Alternatives for consideration:

- Review policy options and issue a formal policy recommendation to Tacoma City Council
- Identify alternative policies from Washington municipalities and share with City of Tacoma staff for review and consideration
- [Long term] Advocate that the City of Tacoma structure future streets initiatives to pay for sidewalks, curb and gutter in order to improve built environment
- Other ideas?



CURRENT CITY TOOLS

- Clear Policy Direction
- Tip Sheets, Standard Plans and Design Manual
- Pre-Application Process and Flowchart
- Variances and Resolve a Permit Dispute Processes
- Fee In-lieu of
- Coordination with CIP and Maintenance
- Sidewalk Replacement Program
- Local Improvement Districts



PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS



- Off-site decision tree flow chart w/ clear thresholds
- Tip Sheets – ADA Ramps and Sidewalk
 - Define Safe School Routes and other “priority” routes in review.
 - Define distance and other clear criteria
 - Link them to Curb Ramp Matrix and Off-site determination
- In lieu of fee for “passable” ADA and walk assistance
- Better CIP and Street Maintenance Coordination
- Off-site determination that is “appealable”.



Additional ideas for consideration?

- What additional information can staff provide?
- We want feedback/ brainstorming from Task Force.
- What actions does the Task Force want to take and what are the next steps?