

Hilltop Engagement Committee (HEC) Meeting Notes*

November 1, 2017

HEC Members Present: Brendan Nelson (co-chair), Denny Faker, Audra Hudson, Hally Bert, Lauren Wheeler, Bishop Lawrence White, Marty Mattes, Kiara...

Staff Members Present: Ian Munce (CoT), Alisa O'Hanlon(CoT), Carol Wolfe(CoT), Chelsea Levy (Sound Transit) Monica Ghosh(CoT), Andy Micklow(CoT), Mitzi McMahan (Sound Transit), Todd Sawin (AHBL), Lucas Johnson (AHBL)

Agenda

A. Call to Order (5:10pm)

1. Guests

Lucas Johnson (LJ):
Project engineer with AHBL

2. Staff Comments

Monica Ghosh (MG):
Sound Transit Open House, November 8 at Evergreen
Trash can project complete in the Hilltop
Andy Micklow (AM) attend the Tacoma Community House Trunk or Treat on Oct. 31

Carol Wolfe (CW):
"Message is being heard" about "development without displacement."
Continue sharing concerns with council members and department heads.

B. Items of Business

1. Report out from contract outreach groups

CW: Wanted to provide context. Links to Opportunity (LTO) wanted to do outreach in a different way. This round was funded by Community and Economic Development (CED). Tried not to have a lot of parameters on consultants. Report out on engagement through 30% design, focused on concepts and ideas on how to keep the community involved. Consultants will submit final reports and City of Tacoma staff (staff) will share with HEC.

Hilltop Action Coalition & Sound Outreach (HAC), Adriane Wilson (AW):
Reporting period ended October 31, 2017. Utilized HAC grassroots network and social media outlets. Online survey about design elements with 400 responses. Created working group: HAC-Links discussions were about streetscape and other concerns in the neighborhood, affordable housing, gentrification, crime.

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Key takeaways – many residents lack knowledge of Link Rail; preference for gathering and shared community spaces; how streetscape related to safety, crime, and affordability. Concerns with equity, access.

Continue involvement of HAC in outreach and engagement. Emphasized need for continued grassroots involvement.

*provided primary report with executive summary, outreach strategies, key takeaways

Marty Mattes (MM): How did you respond to concerns about distrust and transparency? <- not a direct quote

AW: Build trust through conversation; need for continued involvement of organization like HAC

Downtown on the Go (DOTG), Hally Bert (HB) & Kristina Walker (KW)

DOTG is a transportation resource for Tacoma.

DOTG outreach/engagement targeted people where they are. 13 demonstrations, not advertised. 250 people in Envirolitics.

Four strategies: Pop up placemaking, traffic calming, tactical urbanism, speak up training. Pop up placemaking provides tangible examples of streetscape elements; “create a commotion,” engaged 100 people. Traffic calming – crosswalk painting; \$10 gift cards for time <- 100 people, feel respected and honored for time & touch base with business. Tactical urbanism on J Street, involved CoT Active Transportation and ALTA; sharrow and wayfinding signage; 30 local commuters provided feedback; Speak up training – connect people with contacts/organizations/services. Word map – highlighted ‘people.’ Key takeaways – importance of meeting people where they are. Mailings and Hilltop storefront office are important for continued engagement.

CW: Suggestions for continued involvement

HB: Multiple venues, going where people are

Brendan Nelson (BN): Did you have any pop up events in the evening?

HB: Three evening events outside of Red Elm and Rite Aid

MM: Surprised that people didn’t know or thought the Link Extension (TLE) is up for debate, given they are on MLK.

HB: Project office is a great resource.

MM: What assumptions about demographics? Large proportion of people live/work?

HB: Audience was people walking on MLK

HB: A lot of other frustrations, but it was helpful to provide tangible examples of streetscape elements

Audra Hudson (AH): Did you ask people why they were there?

HB: Emphasis was on current users

AH: How would you do follow up?

Denny Faker (DF): What kind of feeling do you have about why ‘we missed the boat’ [about the TLE]?

MM: Hit the mark with grassroots outreach

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Tacoma Housing Authority (THA), Josh Jorgensen (JJ)

THA has had properties in the Hilltop since 1960s & main office in Hilltop since the 1990s; involved in the Hilltop Subarea Plan; have a stake in the neighborhood

Outreach really began in 2016 – laid the foundation for this round. Two pronged effort (education & built environment?) [MA1] Examples of engagement included homework groups, block parties, movie night. Captured young adult demographic. Themes included safety and security, especially lighting; parking; kinds of housing. Importance of allies in Hilltop – highlighted the alley behind 17th. Resulted in 450 page report.

Build on 2016 outreach and outcomes for the LTO. Focus groups of residents. Themes of safety and security; maintenance; curb + gutter. Want to be involved in the “fancy.” Aesthetically it looks like it is falling apart in areas, but there are areas with new/nice sidewalks; not all of the sidewalks need replaced: broad brush. Concerns about small business and housing affordability – THA purchased some properties to start to deal with concerns.

Parking – education and inventory issue; how to address commuters. JJ noted the small share of jobs in the Hilltop that are held by residents.

DF: Why is that we’re hearing people don’t know or are unsure...

JJ: Projects ebb and flow. Notify/engage at beginning, but there may be a delay or lull or just duration or project and people forget or assume it’s happened. Need for updating and re-consulting. Creating buzz is really important – but it is difficult to do in a holistic or authentic way with relevant context.

DF: So boxes that are checked for us are not necessarily checked for the community.

Bishop White (BW): Can you speak more about activating alleys.

JJ: Business owners could use during construction. Others users including those without a place to sleep; importance of alley as a connector.

Perception. Will follow up.

CW: Are you seeing a difference in streetscape priorities that reflect income? Your key takeaways vs DOTG.

JJ: Yes, priorities vary with income. Those with higher incomes tend to go into business, pop out of car and into business, while those with lower income tend to use the corridor for transportation. Functionality over fancy.

JJ: Suggestions for follow up: engage THA property managers.

HB: How will Envirolytics be used? How is it being used to inform design?

Ian Munce (IM): Project reports, but emphasized response in real time.

HB: Tool has been helpful.

2. HEC Discussion

Staff were not present for the remainder of the meeting.

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