



## MINUTES

**MEETING:** Transportation Commission Meeting  
**TIME:** Wednesday, November 19, 2014 5:30pm  
**PLACE:** 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Visibility Center, Tacoma Municipal Building  
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402  
**PRESENT:** Justin Leighton, Jane Moore, Andrew Strobel, Kristina Walker, John Thurlow,  
Judi Hyman, Vance Lelli, Yoshi Kumara, Jacki Skaught, Gary Hofmann  
**ABSENT:** Mike Hutchinson

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Jane Moore called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.

Councilmember Robert Thoms thanked the TC for their hard work on prioritizing expenditures and projects around the City. Districts often compete for funding but transportation does not depend on community boundaries so having a group that looks citywide is extremely helpful. Having continued involvement of the Transportation Commission in the budgeting process will be very helpful for the future.

*Justin Leighton Question:* The TC hasn't seen the budget yet. Is Council trying to re-program things? How else would Council like TC involved in the budgeting process?

*Councilmember Thoms Response:* It will likely be the whole gamut. More formal involvement by the TC would be a good thing to build toward. Likes the idea of the TC being involved earlier in the process, perhaps quarterly, to make sure money is going to the proper places.

*Justin Leighton Follow-Up:* Perhaps Andrew should add the budget process to the work plan.

*Councilmember Thoms Response:* The intent of the Council is for IPS to grow in importance over time and for TC to continue informing them.

### 2. ROLL CALL

Yoshi Kumara arrived at 6pm. Jacki Skaught arrived at 6:24pm.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kristina's vote for transit / bike on Puyallup Ave was excluded in the conflicted corridors review. Minutes were approved as amended.

### 4. BUSINESS ITEMS

#### A. PT DEFIANCE ENTRANCE PROJECT (CURTIS HANCOCK AND KEVIN HOUSE)



Curtis spoke about the Point Defiance Entrance Project and the partnership it has involved within different departments around the City. Metro Parks Tacoma, City of Tacoma, City of Ruston, and WSDOT are all partners on the project.

Curtis noted that traffic gets really backed up at the entrance but only on the Pearl Street approach. The current alignment has 19 different lanes and a roundabout could create better operations. Park Way would be realigned to a more perpendicular approach. The major catalyst for this project is all the complaints of poor pedestrian and bicycle accommodations at the intersection. Curtis showed photos and design schematics for existing roundabouts in other cities.

The project would also affect Pearl Street up to 51<sup>st</sup> St with bike lanes being installed.

*Kristina Walker Question:* Are bikes using sharrows in the roundabout?

*Kevin House Response:* Sharrows from the southern approach coming downhill, turning into a shared use path on the east side of Pearl Street. Vehicular cyclists are expected to take the lane. The crossing will be narrowed significantly from its current 80' width. The north side of the roundabout would connect with other bikeways to the waterfront.

*Justin Leighton Question:* Will the landscaping help the City meet its sustainability goals? What is the plan for the parcel of land on the east side of Pearl Street?

*Curtis Hancock Response:* That parcel of land is owned by Metro Parks and the City of Ruston, plans aren't detailed at the moment.

*Justin Leighton Follow-Up:* Considered bioswales?

*Kevin House Response:* Yes, much of the landscaping being proposed would be rain gardens to infiltrate and treat water as it falls.

*Josh Diekmann Comment:* City has a regional stormwater grant that is spurring on much of this work. The City would like to understand the designs thoroughly in order to make a recommendation to the granting authority and DOT. The City needs to reach out to citizens in the neighborhood, as well as the City of Ruston.

*Curtis Hancock Comment:* The City recently distributed flyers around the entire area and the vast majority of people are in favor.

*Kevin House Comment:* Of the 450 vehicles using this intersection during the PM peak hour, 4 currently make and eastbound right and 20 make a westbound left. Most people they discussed the matter with did not take issue with the proposed operations.

*Andrew Strobel Question:* Ruston originally made the west leg of the intersection one way so is the possible two-way conversion an issue?

*Kevin House Response:* Wasn't an issue with the City.

*Justin Leighton Question:* What about fire department access? Would the roundabout create a problem to the developments at Tobey Jones?

*Kevin House Response:* Fire department comes from the south rather than the north so it's not an issue.

*Justin Leighton Follow-Up:* There are 2 Pierce Transit routes through here so please keep transit-oriented elements in mind.

*Kevin House Response:* The roundabout should improve transit operations.

*Curtis Hancock Comment:* They're also adding a third ferry queuing lane, which should clear up the intersection further.

*Vance Lelli Question:* What about freight? Can they make that turn?

*Kevin House Response:* Yes, 50-foot semis can make that turn.

*Vance Lelli Follow-Up:* Is there a pedestrian pathway going to the water? What's the speed limit?

*Kevin House Response:* Eventually there will be a pathway. Speed limits through the roundabout will be 25mph.

*Andrew Strobel Question:* Are the design elements mirroring the brick sidewalk that's going in on the walkway crossing to Ruston?

*Kevin House Response:* We're not there yet. WSDOT will have some purview. We will likely use textured concrete sidewalks.

*Judi Hyman Question:* What's the schedule?

*Kevin House Response:* Depends on funding, awaiting Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) funding through the City. If we get it, we'd like to install at the same time as this project next spring.

*Curtis Hancock Comment:* Potential State funding would be announced next year.

*Judi Hyman Follow-Up:* What's the schedule if approved?

*Kevin House Response:* About 6 months. Utilities take the most time.

## **B. STREETCAR TASK FORCE (JUSTIN LEIGHTON & ANDREW STROBEL)**

Justin explained that one of the original purposes for the TC was to do a long range plan after the Link expansion and the displeasure that some communities expressed afterward. Justin Leighton, Justin Camarata, and Andrew Strobel have been participating in creating a streetcar plan and Kristina Walker has been observing as well.

Andrew explained the importance of this plan to demonstrating to Sound Transit a coherent network. While we typically want land use to drive transportation through designating transit-oriented areas, it is important for transportation to help encourage zoning changes.

Andrew noted that the City does not set zoning out to 2040 but that this plan could still help steer these decisions.

Most of the lines on this map are already on corridors that are zoned for more development. They also focus on Tacoma Mall, Tacoma Dome Station, and TCC. Justin described each line and the centers it serves or connects to.

The group took a broad approach to these routes. Trying to limit bridge crossings and focus on serving centers instead of taking riders to far off destinations, such as Point Defiance. 38<sup>th</sup> Street is likely too steep for the streetcar, hence using 48<sup>th</sup>, which is still challenging.

*Kristina Walker Question:* We just sent a letter to ST about the Central Link extension. Is that a separate issue?

*Justin Leighton Response:* Yes, that's a separate matter. Discussed with the Mayor how to get from the Dome up to the Mall and it's certainly feasible, though would take some effort. Noting

the transit centers on these maps would be helpful: TCC, Commerce Station, Tacoma Dome, Tacoma Mall.

*Judi Hyman Question:* SR-7 is never getting continued, right? Could we take advantage of that road?

*Tim Payne Response:* It's an old rail right of way.

*Andrew Strobel Comment:* Councilmember Campbell suggested that Sounder Commuter might use those Tacoma Rail lines to get down to Frederickson.

*Tim Payne Comment:* The Prairie Line Trail study found that the right of way is 100 feet wide.

*Vance Lelli Question:* Why not send the yellow line along 38th to hit the south end of the several MUCs?

*Andrew Strobel Response:* That's part of the reason for tonight's discussion.

*Justin Leighton Comment:* Crossing the freeway is one of the challenges but we talked about continuing the purple line as the Top of Tacoma line.

Commissioners discussed potential alignments for the yellow and purple lines and the connections that it would serve. Important to include Salishan and the McKinley District in this plan, especially since equity is a focus of the goals and policies for the TMP. The question of whether the network is circular or serves destinations is important. The current layout is oriented toward destinations due to topography and the layout of destinations and density around the City.

*Kristina Walker Comment:* Concerned that this might bring us back to the conflicted corridors discussion.

*Justin Leighton Response:* The subcommittee discussed this and feels it best to keep the streetcar planning outside of the TMP discussion for now because streetcar is such a long term effort.

*Andrew Strobel Comment:* LOS is one of our constraints around the city network. The amount of money this would require to accommodate all modes would have to be dealt with in the individual line feasibility studies.

*Kristina Walker Follow-Up:* That's fine as long as changes as part of the TMP don't make a mess of these preliminary streetcar plans.

*Justin Leighton Response:* Many of the existing bridges can't support streetcars.

*Judi Hyman Comment:* Likes the purple line extension.

*Vance Lelli Comment:* It's important to hit this mixed use center.

*Andrew Strobel Comment:* Connect to 34<sup>th</sup> or 38<sup>th</sup>.

At this moment, the hope is for Commissioners to consider this plan further moving forward.

*Josh Diekmann Comment:* Staff suggestion is to take this information and propose how to integrate this plan into the TMP.

Commissioners approved this motion.

### **C. TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN – GOALS AND POLICIES REVIEW (JUSTIN RESNICK)**

Justin Resnick began presenting at 6:35pm by passing out documents related to TMP goals and policies. Specifically, he passed out a sheet that tracked how the previous plan's goals and policies have changed throughout the process – keep, modify, move, or eliminate. The sheet

specified the wording of the new policy text for any modifications. He also provided a clean version of the proposed set of policies.

Justin provided a high-level summary of the major changes:

- Changes operationalized the Planning Commission's comment that "policies should be policing something." This input led to a number of wording changes.
- New policies at the end of the document related to safety, ITS, and emergency response in response to feedback from Commissioners and PSRC staff review.
- Policy intent language was added to provide context.

*Justin Leighton Question:* These new policies, where did they come from – staff, consultant, other. Asked about policy on maintenance and rehabilitation (Policy 4.10). He was concerned about the broad language that it might mean that transit may be on the hook to pay for street maintenance. Encouraged commissioners to review policies with a fine-tooth comb.

*Justin Resnick Response:* The current wording of Policy 4.10 could indeed require transit agencies to contribute toward the roadway wear their vehicles cause. Revision to this policy would make sense given that the plan wishes to encourage transit in Tacoma.

*Jane Moore Question:* It sounds like Policy 4.10 is prioritizing vehicle maintenance, but not ped and bike safety. Would we also be asking school buses to pay for street maintenance?

*Josh Diekmann Response:* There are other policies that address maintenance of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Also, these policies are meant to elicit these sorts of questions.

*Jane Moore and Kristina Walker:* Some of the wording is vague and terms should be defined in a glossary.

*Justin Resnick Response:* City staff and the consultant team are keeping a list of terms that belong in a glossary and it would be helpful for Commissioners to share any words that they think belong in the glossary.

*Jane Moore Comment:* Regarding Policy 3.1 and recognizing the function of each street by evaluating transportation projects. I'm concerned that evaluating and benchmarking are different things. We need to be careful to avoid losing some of the meaning of items in the Mobility Master Plan (MoMap).

Commissioners should provide feedback by or before the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Further discussion will take place at the December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Josh may move the TMP report back to January. Jennifer will send out the Word version and allow commissioners to do tracked changes.

Kristina Walker mentioned a transportation / health workshop that discussed innovations in SF. Jane was also at the conference that discussed it.

*Jane Moore Question:* Policy 4.5 references the Greenroads rating system. Is this referring to the trademarked term or a general concept of it?

*Josh Diekmann Response:* City Council passed a resolution that the City of Tacoma would use the trademarked Greenroads rating system approach.

*Jane Moore Comment:* Policies 3.8 and 3.9 discuss pedestrian facilities and trails, respectively, but there is not a policy that addresses bike facilities, which are an important focus in MoMap.

*Justin Leighton and Andrew Strobel Comment:* A policy indicating that density should trigger construction of bike parking facilities should be included.

*Justin Resnick Response:* This policy might fit best in the Generalized Land Use Element or the Zoning Code but it certainly makes sense to have somewhere in the Comprehensive Plan.

Justin Leighton also asked if streetcar policies could be given to Commissioners in Word so that they could wordsmith.

#### **D. TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN – MODAL NETWORK REVIEW (JUSTIN RESNICK)**

Justin passed out a table and maps showing a summary of decision making around the conflicted corridors.

McKinley way was no longer a conflicted corridor due to its removal from the freight priority network.

*Judi Hyman Question:* Was Sprague discussed?

*Justin Resnick Response:* It was not because there are only 2 conflicting modes.

*Justin Leighton Question:* Was freight intentionally kept on Pacific Avenue?

*Justin Resnick Response:* Yes, because it is a state facility and a T-2 route today.

*Andrew Strobel Comment:* The street is at its ultimate cross section and there is no big vision for Pacific Avenue.

*Justin Leighton Follow-Up:* There is no need to change the decision on this corridor, but just adds to his freight frustration.

Justin Resnick then passed out citywide maps of layered network (per the recommendations of the Commissioners).

*Kristina Walker Comment:* Segment 15 (Pearl St) should include bikes as a primary mode north of N 46<sup>th</sup> Street. General agreement among commissioners based on presentation from earlier in the meeting.

*Judi Hyman Comment:* Still unclear on why autos are not a priority within downtown.

*Justin Resnick Response:* A “gentle hand” was given to auto improvements in downtown recognizing the mix of traffic.

Judi mentioned an operational issue with the signals. Josh responded that the operational challenge is being monitored and addressed. Josh spoke to the issue of modal prioritization and that downtown subarea plans have not prioritized cars.

*Judi Hyman, John Thurlow, and Jacki Skaught Comment:* Feel uncomfortable with auto not being shown as a priority in downtown, especially on routes to the freeway.

*Justin Resnick Response:* We could show ramp terminal intersections (and vicinity) as auto priority.

*Kristina Walker Comment:* We should not only prioritize ways out of Tacoma, but also prioritize ways in.

Commissioners summarized changes – 9<sup>th</sup> up to Market, 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, Stadium.

Justin Leighton Comment: A couple of streets are displaying freight that shouldn't be, we need to correct these permanently.

Jane Moore shared that BPTAG was interested in seeing how their input is being incorporated.

Lastly, Justin Resnick asked the commission if we should be showing secondary mode considerations on the maps where lines aren't showed. For example, transit and auto priority will provide several of the elements that freight vehicles need. Kristina responded that we shouldn't do this to avoid setting a precedent. Andrew responded that this exercise is about providing a certain level of service to the top modes.

Kendra shared a very high level version of the mode split and LOS discussion.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. PARKING TASK FORCE**

No updates.

**B. BILLBOARD TASK FORCE** – John will share these thoughts with TC.

**C. BPTAG** – Concerned that TC is prioritizing autos and freight too much. Also concerned about budgets for bike implementation and MOMAP.

## **6. STAFF REPORTS**

Josh went to BPTAG to discuss bike and rail crossings to evaluate potential safety issues and determine if any jogs would be helpful.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Evette Mason: BPTAG seems to be concerned about Center Street and South Tacoma Way. They seemed to think that bikes should get one or the other.

Communicating that level of service doesn't mean excluding modes is the challenge of TC. TC must help people understand how this process is working. Context-sensitive solutions are important and will be used even on corridors that aren't being prioritized for a particular mode.

Kristina announced at event at UW-Tacoma with Ron Sims speaking on transportation and equity.

## **8. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39pm.