



MINUTES

MEETING: Regular Transportation Commission Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

PLACE: Conf. Room 243, Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Leighton called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. Roll Call

CM Nyland and Miller were noted as requesting excused absences. Their request was approved and seconded.

3. Approval of Minutes (March minutes)

Minutes were approved as written.

4. Public Comment for Items on the Agenda

No public comment.

5. Business Items

a. WSDOT SR-167 Update (Tom Slimak)

Tom provided an overview of the Puget Sound Gateway Program (SR509 completion project in King County & SR167 completion project), which improves direct freight links from the largest ports to key distribution centers. He explained that the funding spheres include local (cities, port), Connecting WA funds, INFRA grants, and toll funding.

Co-chair Leighton asked what is included in the local funds. Tom explained that local fund commitments include “cash”, land, grant match. Josh Diekmann also explained that the City of Tacoma match will likely be a contribution in the form of grant match and grant.

Co-Chair Leighton asked if people would try to bypass the toll by diverting through Fife. Tom explained that some drivers would divert to avoid the toll, but the purpose is to price it with demand.

Commissioner Hyman asked what the tolling would look like. Tom explained that they will be similar to the existing HOT lanes tolling system. It would not be toll booths, but similar to Good to Go Pass. All lanes would be tolled. Toll rates have



not been set yet.

Co-chair Moore asked if you are coming from 509 from NE Tacoma could you get on to the new 167. Tom explained that you would but have to take the Taylor Way/54th Avenue intersection and go down to the new proposed access.

Co-Chair Leighton explained that bike and ped egress via 509 is a priority of the Commission's and Transportation Master Plan. Tom explained that WSDOT is aware and the shared use path is being incorporated into the project.

Commissioner Thurlow asked how this project will address the increase in traffic at Alexander and 509, which is already a congestion problem. Tom explained that WSDOT is aware and looking at how to improve flow and address conflicts/congestion through an intersection control analysis.

Co-Chair Leighton asked if the ramp over I-5 will start at 20th St E. Tom explained that it will be at grade.

Co-Chair Moore asked what would happen to the existing 70th avenue overpass. Tom explained that it would be demolished.

Co-Chair Moore asked about the SR167 Ped and Bike Routes map that appears to show routes that don't exist, such as the River Road bike and ped route. Tom stated that this is based on WA bike maps and other city plans/programs. It was pointed out that the map misrepresents the facilities and should be updated/revised.

Tom provided an overview of the program schedule which includes securing ROW for Phase 1 2017-2021 and Phase 1 construction starting in 2019.

Co-chair Leighton asked how much has been spent on this project over the last decade? Tom said he does not know but could get back to the TC with a number.

Commissioner Hyman asked if WSDOT has explored using roadway materials that are more sustainable, such as plastic in asphalt. Tom said that he is not aware, but the ramps will be concrete and the predominant material for roadways will be HMA.

Commissioner Skaught asked about impact fees imposed on the new port developments and if they are contributing to these types of projects. Commissioner Mason explained that Fife does collect impact fees, but for Tacoma the developments make actual improvements to the network. Tom said that WSDOT does reach out to the local jurisdictions to make sure they understand their comp plans and that their modeling is as accurate as possible.

b. Sound Transit Central Link Project Update (Chelsea Levy & Karen Kitsis)

Chelsea Levy provided an overview of the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project, which included potential alignment, station location, and operation & maintenance facility location. The presentation focused on the 9.7 miles between Federal Way and Tacoma Dome, which is proposed to have 4 stops/stations and serve 27,000-37,000. The project is in the planning phase which lasts until 2022, design is 2022-2025, and construction is 2025-2030.

Commissioner Thurlow asked about the feedback from the open house. Chelsea explained that she has not debriefed on the comments, but it was generally well received.

Chelsea narrated a video that shows a flyover over the general route <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca9GPI3I6Rk> starting with Federal Way at S 320 and heading towards Tacoma Dome Station.

Co-Chair Leighton asked about parking lots/garages at Federal Way. Chelsea confirmed that there are large surface lots near the Federal Way stations that would be used for the garages.

Commissioner Hyman asked why not in Tacoma. Chelsea explained that the cost to provide parking prevents it from being provided at all stations. In addition, there are 2 garages at the Tacoma Dome Station and the area will be served by other transit options.

Co-Chair Leighton also explained that the Tacoma Dome Business District does not want to see more parking lots and is advocating for a more transit hub.

Co-Chair Leighton asked about providing pedestrian connections under I-5. Josh explained that the City is working with WSDOT to move the sidewalks behind the columns, but primarily to add a left turn lane to improve traffic congestion/movements.

Chelsea said that they are coordinating closely with WSDOT as they have about 5 projects going on in the corridor so they want to make sure to leave room for each other. A lot of trees will need to be removed as part of this project. Crossing the Puyallup River is one of the bigger challenges of the project as they have to work with Puyallup Tribe as well as the Army Corps of Engineers. They are hoping to keep the pilings out of the river.

Co-chair Leighton asked if the span across Green River near Boeing Field for Central Link is wider than the Puyallup. Chelsea agreed that she thought it was wider.

Co-Chair Leighton encouraged the Commission to consider and push to increase safe, inviting pedestrian connections between the station and under/across I-5. Josh said that the City has been coordinating with WSDOT on the area underneath I-5 and that there will be improvements to the sidewalk, but that is so there is more vehicular capacity so it won't necessarily make the sidewalk underneath wider or safer for pedestrians. Co-chair Leighton reiterated that the Commission should fight to make it safer for pedestrians.

Chelsea said that the goal is to make the transition between the available modes of transportation as seamless as possible for pedestrians.

Co-Chair Leighton explained that he is concerned about the distance separation between TDLE, TLINK and buses at the Tacoma Dome Station. Commissioner Skaught is interested in seeing how all of these alternatives work together and encouraged using alternative modes.

c. Pierce Transit Pacific Avenue High Capacity Transit Outreach Update (Darin Stavish & Ryan Wheaton)

Ryan Wheaton, Pierce Transit's new Planning Director, and Darin provided an overview of the Key decisions made and summary of outreach. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was selected as the preferred alternative.

Co-Chair Leighton asked how long it would take to go from 204th to Downtown Tacoma. Darin explained that they have not determined what the number is because it does depend on the alignment, stations, traffic conditions/improvements, but they are modeling that right now.

Darin asked the Commission to provide a preference of alignment of Puyallup Ave vs East 26th Street. The designer is looking at both options.

Darin explained that the route through downtown will be on Market instead of Pacific due to the limited travel lanes and angle parking. Darin reviewed the station location and operation alignments alternatives – curbside, median, and mix. The least expensive and easiest to design is mixed traffic right lane. Business Access Transit (BAT) lanes is the most expensive option – asphalt concrete lane is built in the far right lane and it would only be for emergency or BRT vehicle use unless you are turning right at intersection or into a driveway.

Darin asked to come back in June with the consultant's recommended alternative.

Co-chair Leighton asked if they have whittled down the ROW for the bus. Darin explained that they had not decided yet – it's a mix and match option. They are looking at all options – not only for speed but for value as well.

Co-Chair Leighton commented that the Commission will want to provide a recommendation to IPS.

Co-chair Leighton said he felt there are too many stations driving up the cost and slowing down the trip time. For example, stops at 108, 102 and 96th – 3 stations within 3 blocks. Darin said that these are there for connection to current routes and traffic flow (east-west traffic), and ridership counts. Darin explained that minimum is 1/3 mile and max 1 mile between stops – some blocks will be off the table and others can be negotiated.

Co-chair Leighton asked Darin to provide current stop ridership information as part of this conversation. These three stops mentioned above will have a cost of approx. \$350K each – is this really advantageous to the rider and Pierce Transit?

Commissioner Brown asked how this project will incorporate or coincide with bicycle facilities, specifically east of the alignment. Darin explained that this project does not incorporate bike facilities, but there may be opportunities to work with Tacoma to provide these cross connections. (Note: A Street is designated as a bike boulevard, but is not completed/improved.)

Darin explained that there were a series of open houses (in-person and virtual),

meeting with organizations/neighborhood groups, bus rack cards, GovDelivery, etc., newspaper, Facebook and Twitter.

Darin will be providing additional information about ridership and distance between stops.

Darin mentioned that they are working to identify opportunities for creation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). TOD features include high density, walkable districts, walkable design with ped amenities, etc. They are coordinating a livable City year studio in the Spring with the UWT Seattle and COT. In the Spring they will do a design studio that focusses on 38th & 72nd.

Co-Chair Leighton confirmed the timeline with Darin – they are going to Pierce Transit Board with an alternative update on June 11 and then a final decision made on July 9. Tacoma City & Pierce County Council would receive a presentation on June 26.

Co-Chair Leighton explained that commissioners should be prepared at the June 20th meeting to decide/comment on the Puyallup Ave alignment, station location and median vs curbside. Darin said they will try to bring the preferred alternative to the Commission two weeks prior.

Commissioner Mason asked if it is important to know where the cross routes are-in case someone needs to make a connection. This way they can avoid eliminating stops that are key connections. Co-chair Leighton said that it would be a good addendum to the material to show integration of different modes for the future and the connections. Darin said that they will provide a higher level map that shows where those cross routes are.

6. Other Business/Updates

a. Parking Technical Advisory Group (PTAG)

Commissioner Hyman said that they are continuing to work on occupancy study.

b. Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group (BPTAG)

Jennifer said that the group reviewed potential bike and ped grants and what they should include.

c. Planning Commission Agenda

2019-2024 Capital Facilities Program; 2018 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

d. Commission Comments

Co-Chair Leighton stated that the Co-Chairs participated in a meeting with other Commission Co-Chairs (Sustainability & Planning) to discuss work plans. One of the discussion items was transit oriented zoning –although it is a Planning Commission item the TC should be helping inform from a transportation perspective where the zoning should be.

Co-Chair Leighton and Moore stated their concerns with Kurtis Kingsolver’s letter

to City Manager missed the point of the initial letter that asked for the Commission to be part of a total review of the sidewalk program and incorporation of the low-income hazardous sidewalk program before the budget cycle. Josh explained that Public Works is committed to make a budget request to better fund the program. Co-Chair Leighton explained that he would like to work with Staff to develop the program.

Commissioner Hyman suggested that the Co-Chairs meet with the Public Works Director to restate the Commission's request. Josh said he would be happy to set up a meeting with the Director and both Co-chairs. Co-chair Leighton said that he would like Josh to set up a meeting.

CM Skaught said that she felt this is an opportunity for other Commission members to be part of the meeting so there is a fresh pair of ears and eyes. Co-chair Leighton concurred.

Commissioner Warren would be interested in participating in the meeting with the Public Works Director regarding the Hazardous Sidewalk Program.

Commissioner Brown asked for clarification on what the low-income criteria was, as stated on the 2nd page.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Thurlow explained that Ryan Wheaton was the Pierce Transit staff member that worked on the Route 63 reactivated.

Commissioner Warren asked about next steps for the Impact Fees. Josh said that we could put the item on the agenda and work with Co-chairs.

7. Staff Reports

a. Responses to Commission Inquiries

Josh explained that Staff has been working on design alternatives for Taylor Way to accommodate bicycle facilities as included in the TMP. Staff will be bringing a recommendation to BPTAG that does not include bicycle facilities on the currently grant funded project due to cost and time it would take to acquire ROW, which is outside of the grant obligation window. On Taylor way itself from 509 to Lincoln there are no sidewalks or bike facilities and from Lincoln to 11th there is a 5' sidewalk on one side of the street. The grant itself does include adding a 9-10' sidewalk from Lincoln to 509 which is not quite a dedicated bike facility but it does provide ped & bike access which adds some connectivity.

Commissioner Thurlow explained that at the time of development of the TMP, he and Council Member Walker discussed Taylor Way as a place to have bicycle facilities. It was not accepted at the time because Taylor way was a mess so he feels to come to the point Josh mentioned is great progress.

b. Status of Grant Applications & Major Capital Projects

Staff will provide an update to the grants submitted or being submitted.

c. Upcoming Public Meetings & Events

Jennifer sent information to the Commission separately by e-mail.

8. Public Comment

No public comment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.