



## CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

**Date:** September 13, 2016

**Commission Members Present:** Lowell Wyse, Chrissy Cooley, Sarah Chessman, Josh Jorgensen, Alexandra Brewer, Alison Baur, Peter Hickman, Philip Coughlan

**Commission Members Excused:** Alyssa Illich, Theda Braddock

**Others Present:** Chelsea Levy, Elliott Barnett, Jessica Knickerbocker, Kristin Lynett, Emily Campbell, Emmery Ledin, Lisa Rennie, Jim Parvey, Jeanne Walter, Emily Watts

▪ **Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:37pm.

▪ **Approval of August 9, 2016 Meeting Notes**

The August meeting notes were approved.

▪ **Review of August Agenda**

The August agenda was approved with the addition of reviewing the STC's letter to Council regarding the Environmental Action Plan priority actions.

▪ **Sound Transit Ballot Proposal Informational Overview – Chelsea Levy**

- Chelsea presented about Sound Transit and ST3. Sound Transit serves urban areas of local counties. From Everett from DuPont they have three types of transit – bus, train and light rail. Many people rely on the local transit networks. The Sounder South line is very popular, likely due to population growth. They have seen a 15% increase in ridership. Recently a mid-day train service was added.
- By 2040, they are expecting 800,000 more people in the service district. They are estimating a large jump in ridership because of ST3, which they started planning in 2014; so there will be additional Sounder service, as well as other light rail extensions. If ST3 passes, there will be 116 miles of light rail and 35 new stations. They would add capacity to the Sounder train to make them 10-car trains. The plan would also include bus rapid transit (BRT), TOD and Technology plans. There would be a significant investment in BRT which would help people who want to get to the east side of Seattle, but get stuck in significant traffic.
- Additional future plans include buses possibly being able to use the road shoulder during high traffic, and extension of the Sounder into the South Sound area (JBLM).

- Funding for these projects would be about \$54 billion. This would come from a sales tax increase, new taxes, grants and money from riders. ST3 would save 793,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases annually (taking many vehicles off the road), and ST3 would increase mobility for everyone. Travel time saved would amount to \$783 million, and the plan would create thousands of jobs, and increase access to jobs.
- Commission members had questions/comments including the following:
  - How long is a Sounder trip from Tacoma Dome to Seattle? 70 minutes, 30 minutes to the airport
  - Are there plans to change parking for ST3? There is no plan to phase out parking. There will be investments in many new parking stalls. There is a hope to change zoning and increase density around the stations, but the majority of riders access facilities by car.
  - Are there plans to add to the Tacoma Dome Garage? No.
  - Regarding charging for parking, right now Sound Transit doesn't charge, but that will change. Carpool permits will be given out. The goal is for more people and fewer cars with access to transit.
  - Member commented that an incentive for ridership is improved Wi-Fi access on the train.
  - Regarding expanding the Sounder capacity, does freight get the right-of-way? Sound Transit has an easement and is paying BNSF to use the tracks during commute hours.
  - Member suggested calculating a dollar value of doing vs. not doing ST3, including productivity loss, CO2 emissions, sitting in traffic, etc.
  - Member asked about a Council resolution regarding ST3; and there will be a resolution in the future.
  - Lowell will be drafting a letter regarding ST3.
- **Mall Sub-Area Plan Update – Elliott Barnett and Jessica Knickerbocker**
  - Elliott Barnett presented on the Mall Sub-Area Plan project which involves a 600 acre area, including the Tacoma Mall. The area has been designated for job growth and housing, and is part of a regional land use vision.
  - The Environmental Impact Statement process is underway. The existing condition is currently far from the vision – there is an emphasis on urban design. There are many transportation-related issues in the area - no bike facilities, only one transit station, and busy traffic. There are also many opportunities to improve stormwater quality. A National Estuaries Protection Grant was received for design of the project. Overall, it is a great place for growth, with the right infrastructure.
  - They are working on Transfer of Development Rights because there is interest in building taller buildings in Tacoma, and the City has determined this area is appropriate for high density. This initiative assists in protecting farms and forest lands.
  - The Plan divides the area in four quadrants that are different, but connected:
    - Mall quadrant;
    - Madison District - residential, low density;
    - NW Quadrant - strip commercial, light industrial with significant street layout change recommended; and
    - Lincoln Heights - WW2 housing community, historic
  - To increase walkability, they are considering a loop road that connects the four quadrants; it will be a green street, green stormwater infrastructure with street trees and low traffic speed.
  - Actions that will be broken into short term projects include:
    - Connecting the grid
    - Pedestrian-oriented facilities
    - Complete streets
    - Mode shift and internal capture
    - Connecting parks
    - Improving the bike system
    - Planning for high capacity transit service: connect to city and region
    - Putting transit close to the neighborhoods: create consolidated transit hub

- Transit oriented development: New off-ramp from I-5 is being proposed
- Jessica presented on stormwater and trees related to this project. The sub-area is at the head of two sensitive watersheds. Because of this, there is a Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy and tree canopy goals. Right now much of the area is conducive to infiltration – there are concerns about pollutants in the industrial area, because it’s at the headwaters of a watershed. The pipes are in good condition currently, but there is occasional surcharging – when water leaves the manholes and enters the street. There will be regional treatment and emergency overflows in industrial areas, including permeable pavements and rain gardens which assist in planning for flooding and overflow.
- The City has a 30 by 30 Canopy Goal (30% canopy cover by 2030). The existing canopy in this area is 7-12%, and the target is 20-25%, which will be achievable with just street trees. There is a lack of parks in the area, with some existing facilities that need attention. The plan is for one park in each quadrant connected by the loop road, but momentum is needed for this.
- There is much work to be done for implementation and funding. To get funding, they must get attention and get the neighborhoods excited about it. They’d like to implement incentives for water conservation, but comments from the public are needed.
- Commission members had questions/comments including the following:
  - To increase walkability, will buildings be moved to face the sidewalk and hide the parking lots? Unfortunately, this would involve too much redevelopment. Zoning is largely in place for these measures.
  - What are the aspects of this Plan that make the neighborhoods more socially equitable? Currently, 4,000 people live in this area and they are hoping to triple this number. There will be more trees, sidewalks and parks. Affordability isn’t currently an issue in the area.
  - A member commented that trees could be used as a buffer for the community along the large roads.
  - Why are canopy goals not 30%? (The member mentioned that the goal should be more aggressive.) A 20-25% increase would be a very noticeable change. 30% is feasible; however 20-25% is the goal now. Because this is a high-density area, more than 20-25% may prove to be difficult.
  - What is the schedule for public comment? A first draft will go to the Planning Commission in 1-2 months, and it will be open for public comment in 3-4 months.

▪ **Accidental Omission Letter**

The Commission discussed an accidental omission to the letter they sent to Council regarding the Environmental Action Plan priority actions. They identified six priorities, but accidentally left the green building advisor off the letter. Sending a new letter, rather than an email with the corrected letter is best because it includes a formal change. Chrissy will work with Kristi to update the letter.

▪ **Discussion on I-732 – Chrissy Cooley and Lowell Wyse**

- The I-732 is a proposed tax swap to put a price on carbon emissions in Washington. Prominent environmental groups in the area are against the initiative. There was a question posed as to whether or not the Commission should take a stand on the initiative.
- Commissioners made points against the initiative including:
  - It’s not good climate policy and WA can do much better. It’s not a very aggressive policy.
  - It may result in voter fatigue.
  - The Governor’s Clean Air Rule will be coming out this week, and it’s unclear how these policies will interact.
  - Caps and regulations are desirable, but if it’s not in the market mechanism, it’s not sustainable.
- Commissioners made points in support of the initiative including:
  - A cap is highly supported; policy won’t be guaranteed to lower carbon emissions without a cap. It’s unfortunate that cap and trade isn’t going through.

- A member mentioned that he can't vote against a price on carbon, but he's on the fence.
- A member asked if it is better to go forward now with something that could be improved, or wait for something better later? It was concluded that the initiative isn't likely to be significantly changed over time.
- The Commission agreed to create a pros and cons list with a deliberation. This is an important topic, so the public should educate themselves and vote accordingly. This list would be a public orientation, written to the IPS Committee. It was recommended that the Commission put an open letter on the City's sustainability website. It was also recommended that Council encourage their constituents to educate themselves on the initiative. The Commission could also write a Letter to the Editor.

▪ **Subcommittees Discussion**

The members want subcommittees that are in alignment with the Environmental Action Plan, with the addition of a subcommittee on education and outreach. There are seven subcommittees to sign up for and if any have 0-1 members, they may be cut. Members passed around a sign-up sheet for subcommittees.

▪ **Staff Updates**

- Discussion of the Environmental Action Plan was moved to the October 12 meeting of the IPS Committee because the City Manager's budget doesn't come out until October 4. At this meeting, the Sustainable Materials Management Plan will also be discussed, and it will be an important meeting to attend.
- The Sustainable Tacoma Commission is recruiting for the new youth member.

▪ **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- The Commission will write a letter in support of ST3.
- The Commission will have a pros and cons list drafted for I-732.
- Subcommittees will be assigned.
- Potential presentations for October:
  - Tacoma Power (overview, preference, electric vehicles and automated meters)
  - Healthy Homes, Healthy Neighborhoods
  - Low Impact Development Design Standards and Guidelines
  - Implementation Plan for Bring Your Own Bag
- There is a preference for one presentation so meetings aren't pressed for time.

▪ **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 733 Market Street, TMB-North, Room 16.