



August 15, 2022

Tina Lee, Pierce Transit Planning Manager
Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit Planner
Pierce Transit
3701 96th St. SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

RE: Bus Rapid Transit and Stream System Expansion Study

Dear Ms. Lee & Mr. Stavish:

The City of Tacoma's Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG) is composed of a diverse range of individuals and interests from the City's Commissions and neighborhoods. TODAG has been monitoring the development of transit, transportation, and land use projects that may affect transit ridership and accessibility to transit. TODAG received a presentation from you on the Stream System Expansion Study (SSES) on June 27, 2022. We would like to thank you for the update, and would like to provide additional comments.

Pierce Transit is to be commended for engaging the public in a process to develop potential corridors for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The Pierce County community is generally underserved in regard to frequent, convenient, high capacity transit, so the SSES is a welcome step forward. This initiative has the full confidence of the TODAG to help identify what the most promising investments for potential BRT service should be further studied to potentially serve the community. Pierce Transit considered relevant data and issues such as access to jobs, land use, socioeconomic equity, ridership, and multimodal connectivity. These criteria sync well with the Puget Sound Region's Vision 2050 plan, as well as the City of Tacoma's development priorities and policy goals as TODAG interprets them.

Through the presentation, TODAG learned that corridor B2 scored the highest against these unweighted evaluation criteria. The B2 corridor would connect Lakewood Town Center, the Tacoma Mall and Downtown Tacoma Regional Growth Centers and travel principally along 108th Street SW, South Tacoma Way, S. 48th Street and Pacific Avenue.

Corridor B2 should be moved forward for future development of a preferred transit alternative to succeed BRT Corridor 1 on Pacific Avenue. Pierce Transit should partner with the City of Tacoma to develop a subarea plan and EIS to enhance the neighborhoods and growth centers in the area of the proposed corridor, similar to the "Picture Pac Avenue" corridor plan and EIS currently underway.

Moreover, future BRT or high capacity transit corridors should generally have a subarea plan in place *prior* to transit project development in order to ensure that the community has adequate buy-in for transit-supportive land use, design standards, and transit quality standards that will set the stage for successful grant applications and a successful BRT project. It is important to note that BRT Corridor 1 on Pacific Avenue proceeded with project development without a



subarea plan in the City of Tacoma. With the right plans in place, TODAG believes that transit can be a catalytic and transformational public investment in livability, climate resiliency, equity, housing security, and economic development.

TODAG also recommends consideration of the Tacoma Dome Station as a potential northern terminus for Corridor B2 in future study. Tacoma Mall to Tacoma Dome is an important transportation connection whose demand will likely grow over time. TODAG also encourages future study of permutations of the B2 corridor that serve the Lincoln District Mixed Use Center, Lower Pacific Avenue Mixed Use Center, and McKinley Mixed Use Centers, in order to maximize future development potential along the second Pierce County BRT corridor.

Finally, TODAG wishes to highlight the need for future bus rapid transit projects to emphasize the safety of all roadway users – especially that of pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders when crossing arterial streets. We encourage Pierce Transit to explore corridor options that can accommodate traffic calming measures and robust physical barriers to protect vulnerable users from collisions with high speed traffic. Pierce Transit's clear recognition of the importance of safety will help to encourage ridership and build community support for future bus rapid transit projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SSES, which is a critical step in setting the stage for the expansion of the BRT system.

Sincerely,



Imad H. Bahbah, AIA
Chair of TODAG

(Chris Karnes, Lead Author, Member of TODAG and Chair of Planning Commission)

- c. Mayor Victoria Woodards and Tacoma City Council
Tacoma Transportation Commission
Tacoma Planning Commission
Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services Department