



City of Tacoma Bicycle and Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group

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AGENDA March 28, 2022 5:30-7:30 PM

I. Call to order, land acknowledgement, and approval of minutes **5:30**

We gratefully honor and acknowledge that we reside on the traditional lands of the Puyallup People. The Puyallup people have lived on this land since the beginning of time. They are still here today. They live, work, raise their children, take care of their community, practice their traditional ways and speak the Twulshootseed language – just as their ancestors did.

II. Introductions & Approval of Minutes **5:35**

Members in Attendance: Dana Brownfield, Tyler Russell, Cindy Schaarschmidt, Julian Helmer, Kessa Clair-Woldt, Jennifer Halverson-Kuehn, Matt Pavolka

Transportation Commission member in attendance: Erin Anderson

Called to order 5:33 p.m.

Jenn Halverson-Kuehn – Icebreaker

5:44 Tyler motioned to approve minutes, Cindy seconded, minutes approved

III. Public Comment **5:45**

5:45 no members of the public provided comment

IV. Business Items: **6:00**

- **State of Sidewalks:** Debrief & Discuss Council Presentation

Liz Kaster, Active Transportation Coordinator, shared a presentation from last Tuesday's Council study session, "State of the Sidewalks". Presentation showed that funding and construction of sidewalk is not on track to meet Council goals for 2040. Data caveats: only addresses presence of sidewalk not quality, high level cost estimate, cost of APS not known (example: Pine St Bikeway one intersection 38k, one 400k). Total cost to complete network = \$1.9B. At current rate of progress it will take 119yrs to complete network. Unfit-unsafe sidewalk repairs are complaint driven. Sidewalk beveling & repair pilot project has been implemented on city owned property street frontages, \$89 per hazard = more affordable, rapid repair. Priority actions and next steps for sidewalk moving forward include: Vision Zero plan, Safe Routes to School/Bike-Ped grants, city policy review, TMP update & prioritization, additional funding needed incl. grants and match. Example from another community: Oakland requires sidewalk to be constructed when property sold (WA state law doesn't allow that exact program), more research needs to be done to see what options might exist under WA state law.

Kerri – Council seemed interested, there were comments related to sticker shock. Kerri made the case for the importance of prioritizing in budget year.



Jenn - Council talked about the 1.9 billion number. JH would like to see greater ownership of the problem. Suggested the idea of writing a letter to highlight what a high priority this is for BPTAG and that we need to address the issue at a faster rate. The letter would also ask for a look at what type of staffing would need to be brought on to address the issue.

Kerri – Sidewalk improvement seems to be often seen as economic development in areas like Downtown. It should be considered in all parts of the city in terms of climate change, public health, etc.

Jenn – We hear of Level of Service (LOS) being used to discuss vehicles, but not LOS for pedestrians. Wants to highlight the reality that there is failed LOS for pedestrians in many areas of the city.

Tyler – Supports the idea of a letter, asked a question about whether there is anecdotal information about which neighborhoods need improvements more.

Liz – We don't have that data for sidewalk quality, do have data for presence of sidewalk and can use GIS to break it down by neighborhoods.

Tyler – Expressed that the problem merits serious consideration from the Council. Asked whether there are stories from citizens to share to highlight the problems?

Jenn – Can we contact 311 complainants to get their stories? Stories will likely vary by neighborhood. North end has more complete network but older more-damaged sidewalk, South End and Eastside have more missing sidewalk, but may have less damage due to less tree coverage.

Liz – possible partnership opportunity with new combined Puyallup Watershed Initiative and Step it Up group doing work in East & South Tacoma.

Matt – Mentioned that as a contractor he has built sidewalk in Tacoma. Tacoma can be a challenging city to build in. It costs more to build in Tacoma, for example on N Alder St near the University of Puget Sound campus the City created a new University District sidewalk standard design in the middle of construction that held up sidewalk construction for months. Matt offered to provide information for letter about unique Tacoma project requirements that increase cost relative to other cities.

Liz – Explained that a next step from Council will be to continue sidewalk conversations at the Infrastructure Planning and Sustainability Committee.

Jenn – Jenn will draft a letter with input from Matt and have it ready for BPTAG approval at the next meeting.

- **BPTAG Route Prioritization Request: S Oakes St vs. S Fife St**
from S 47th St to S 74th St

Liz – The City needs a formal recommendation from BPTAG on how to get folks traveling north-south from Tacoma Mall to South Tacoma Sounder Station. The recommendation is needed for Sound Transit's South Tacoma Station Access project. The options are S Oakes St and S Fife St. Both are pretty residential. The north end near the mall is already planned to be on S Fife St. The decision comes down to the character of each street, the widths available and competing transportation functions, in determining which could provide a better facility for bikes. The choice is between cycle tracks/protected bike lanes on S Oakes St vs a traffic-calmed bike boulevard on S Fife St. S Oakes St is a transit route which gives riders better transit access but also requires interactions between people on bikes and busses. S Fife St has some existing traffic circles, but there are opportunities to add more traffic calming, including traffic diverters to further reduce vehicle traffic. S Fife St would require arterial crossing improvements at 56th and 74th. Liz did a bike site visit. The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) identifies S Oakes St as the bicycle route. A recommendation for S Fife St does not have to include a recommendation to remove S Oakes St from the TMP.

Dana – If we choose Fife for Bikes, will Oakes still get sidewalk improvements?

Liz – Sidewalks are not in Sound Transit's project scope for either route scope right now, but we could bring them up with Sound Transit.



Tyler – What would it take to get traffic diverters? Have seen them in Seattle and likes how they work there.

Liz – They are definitely something that can be considered for the project scope. Diverters were included in the recent, grant funded, S J St bicycle boulevard in the Hilltop Neighborhood. The city was able to come up with an acceptable design despite S J St being an important emergency services corridor.

Tyler – Is Fife the easier option?

Liz – Parking and busses can make Oakes more challenging.

Jenn – Sees Fife as west side version of what Park Ave is on the Eastside, calm, quiet. Jenn mentioned curb bulbs near Downing Elementary at N 23rd St & N Villard St as an example of traffic calming the City has recently implemented. Jen likes the narrowness of the street to slow traffic where two vehicles can't easily travel east-west through the intersection at the same time. She would like to have seen wider sidewalk on S 23rd St. The park and school lead to a high volume of pedestrians and people on wheeled mobility devices in the area.

Dan Hansen, Traffic Engineer and meeting note taker – explained that the city sidewalk standards require wider sidewalks on streets that are classified as arterials, in mixed-use centers and in Downtown. All other areas the sidewalk width defaults to a 5' wide minimum. The Design Manual does not specify greater sidewalk widths based on the land-use of the adjacent properties.

Liz – Do Matt/Dan know cost difference of 5' vs 7' sidewalk?

Matt - It is highly variable by project. Extra width can impact the project in ways that go beyond the costs of the extra concrete.

Jenn – Moved to recommend S Fife St. **The Members voted to formally recommend ST study Fife rather than Oakes for the South Tacoma Sounder Station access project. They envision a bicycle boulevard on Fife from S 48th to S 74th as the preferred priority route – with traffic calming/diverters throughout the corridor and arterial crossing improvements at 56th and 74th St**

Liz – Described her recent bike tour with Council Members Bushnell and Walker of Tacoma and Mayor Roscoe from City of Fife. South Sounder station was one destination, S Fife St was one of the nicest portions of ride and has potential to be even better.

Liz – Shared Tacoma Mobility Options interactive bikeway maps (www.cityoftacoma.org/mobility). Mentioned the S J St Bike Blvd grant has been awarded.

- **Puyallup Avenue Letter of Support**

Liz - City is applying for grant for a complete streets project on Puyallup Ave. It would include a cycle track on north side. No more design work since we last spoke. The way the grant gets written is tied to original PSRC grant application, which mentions bike lanes, but that doesn't limit the bike facility type, they can go above and beyond. The state transportation package has \$9M for Puyallup Ave. Also, some (maybe around \$5M) of the \$30M the Transportation package funds for the Puyallup to Tacoma trail could go to Puyallup Ave in the City of Tacoma. The city needs a bit more from the PSRC grant to get the project fully funded. In other news, the Schuster Parkway trail got \$15M as a separate but related project in the State Transportation Package.

Jenn – Mark D'Andrea asked if BPTAG would write letter of support for PSRC for grant application. Jenn has drafted the letter.

Kerri – We need to emphasize keeping bus stops on E D St, because business district has discussed removal.

Liz – That is good feedback for design, but the letter is a high level document of support for the project, so that level of detail isn't needed for this letter. Recently the City decided to



keep PSRC design money. Now we have construction money from State. These mean that the project is very likely to move forward and eventually be completed.
Jenn – Shared the letter of support on screen for members to read.

Cindy – made motion to approved the letter
Matt – seconded
BPTAG approved

Liz – Shared the potential route for a Tacoma to Puyallup trail, after crossing the river on Fishing Wars Bridge, they are looking at options for bikes at the Puyallup Ave and Portland Ave intersection. One possibility being explored is to possibly get bikes under Portland Ave on the existing connection between E Bay St and Puyallup Ave, rather requiring them to travel through the intersection. The city is doing traffic analysis now.

- **General Updates**

- South Tacoma Sounder Station Access Updates
- Grants

Liz - S 84th St is strong grant candidate; she did a walking tour with the South End Neighborhood Council.

Jenn – Exciting that South End doing walking route evaluation.

V. Updates

7:20

- **Report from Transportation Commission**

Erin – There was a presentation on parking management including the technology the City is using. Presenter was very knowledgeable. Home in Tacoma Phase 2 is starting. Vision Zero presentation was given by Carrie Wilhelme.

Jenn – Commissioners expressed some displeasure at how Home in Tacoma Phase 1 seemed watered down.

Erin – Agreed that there was some displeasure.

- **BPTAG at other active transportation meetings**

Jenn – Was at a Pierce County Council meeting. Gave recommendations for things that need to be added to Road Design Manual, suggested they swap the term “collision” or “crash” for “accident”.

Tyler – Is there root cause analysis when there is a vehicle-ped collision in the City?

Liz – There is not. We look at crash data holistically to see where there may be concerns. We pull crash reports when applying for grants to get more detailed information.

Jenn – Mentioned that crash reports are all submitted through the lens of the officer on the scene and filtered through their lens of what they think the contributing factors or causes were.

Tyler – Seems like there could be a more professional analysis for consistency and expertise. A collision recently happened near where Tyler lives in South Tacoma on Sprague near schools. Tyler was wondering if it had been evaluated.

Kerri – Related a story where police did not come to a crash that she was injured in, so crash was not recorded.

Dana – Said she once self-reported her crash through a state Patrol portal on their website. Multiple members wondered whether that self-reported crash goes into the standard state database.

The group thanked Cindy for her service on the advisory group. This was Cindy’s last meeting with BPTAG.



VI. Adjourn

7:07



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