



# Puyallup Avenue Corridor Conceptual Design

## Tech Memo #2: Community Input

January 2017



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Public participation is a key element of the Puyallup Avenue Corridor Conceptual Plan, which is developing a multimodal concept for the corridor that will enhance the experience for everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, transit riders, and freight operators. To secure input from a broad cross-section of Tacoma residents, business owners, and others who travel on Puyallup Avenue today, the project team conducted focus groups, surveys, and a community design charrette in October and November 2016 to gather feedback on the future design of the corridor. These early efforts support project outreach goals to:

- **Strengthen existing and establish new relationships** with the immediate community in order to understand needs, questions, and concerns with the Puyallup Avenue Corridor project.
- **Generate broad community understanding of the project**, including how community input will shape the selection of a conceptual design and future implementation.
- **Share information** about the design progress and communicate opportunities for public involvement.
- **Incorporate input** from stakeholders and the community into corridor goals and objectives to ensure that the design alternatives respond to feedback.

## REPORT ORGANIZATION

This technical report summarizes the results from the fall 2016 community outreach efforts and is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2** summarizes the methodology and results of two stakeholder focus groups held in October 2016
- **Chapter 3** reports the methodology and key findings from community surveys conducted online and in person in October and November 2016
- **Chapter 4** presents the results from a day-long stakeholder and community design charrette in November 2016
- **Chapter 5** summarizes the key themes and findings from community outreach efforts to date

## PROJECT STUDY AREA

The study area encompasses Puyallup Avenue from Portland Avenue to South C Street, as illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.** Because land uses and built form change a

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City of Tacoma

long the corridor's length, this project refers to three districts within the corridor—Neighborhood, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and Industrial.

**Figure 1-1 Study Area Districts**





## 2 STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

### METHODOLOGY

A key outcome of the Puyallup Avenue Corridor Design project is the development of alternative street designs for Puyallup Avenue that are embraced by those who live near, work along, and use the corridor every day. Focus groups with stakeholders are a way to engage a subset of those most affected in a targeted conversation about their desires for the corridor. The project team facilitated two stakeholder focus groups in mid-October to solicit perspectives on opportunities and challenges to be addressed through the conceptual design.

The City of Tacoma identified stakeholders who live and work on the corridor and use Puyallup Avenue regularly as key participants for these focus groups. City staff sent email invitations to residents, business owners, freight companies, pedestrian and bicyclist interest groups, the Foss Waterway Development Authority, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Rail Division, Pierce Transit, and the Summit Olympus School.

The stakeholder focus groups were held on Tuesday, October 18 and Wednesday, October 19 at 301 Puyallup Avenue and included 15 total participants—11 the first night and four the second night.

Results of the focus groups informed the community design charrette and will be incorporated into preliminary corridor alternatives.

### Participants

#### Stakeholder Focus Group Participants

- Jori Adkins, Dome District, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council
- Rick Semple, Dome District, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council
- David D’Aniello, Property Owner at 220 Puyallup Avenue
- Hannah Miner, Puyallup Watershed Initiative
- Norm Gollub, Foss Waterway Development Authority
- Milt Tremblay, UW Tacoma
- James Sinding, UW Tacoma
- Bob Stack, Nichols Trucking
- Gary Hofmann, Tacoma Transload
- Ralph Snyder, Industrial Tire
- Shylah Hayles, Diamond Parking
- Greg Ponikvar, Summit Olympus School
- John Levi, Summit Olympus School
- Janet Matkin, WSDOT Rail Division
- Jennifer Wieland, Nelson\Nygaard
- Jody Trendler, Nelson\Nygaard

## RESULTS

Stakeholder focus group discussions focused on how the Puyallup Avenue corridor functions today and opportunities for change (see Appendix A for the list of discussion questions). The following section presents a summary of key themes from the focus groups, organized by topic area. Specific ideas, recommendations, and considerations are presented as bullet points.

### South Downtown Subarea Plan

Stakeholders are proud of their involvement in the development of the subarea plan and want to see that work come to fruition. Another desire is to see things “done once,” not designed and redesigned multiple times.

#### Transit

The corridor is a major transit hub for the city and region. Focus group participants expressed strong support for improving access to Tacoma Dome Station (TDS) for people on foot or on bike. They noted that access to TDS for all ages and abilities is critical, as school-aged children and older adults use transit in the area. Participants expressed concern that multiple construction projects could have a negative impact on transit service. Stakeholders emphasized the need for the following:

- Pedestrian access to TDS from bus stops and other destinations along the corridor should be improved.
- Many agencies have work underway near Puyallup Avenue and in the vicinity of TDS; work by the city, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, and WSDOT should be coordinated.
- The subarea plan called for a quiet zone that should be implemented to support future residential development.
- The design for Puyallup Avenue must be connected with the Sound Transit Station Access Study.
- Multimodal connections to transit can be improved; there is not enough parking at TDS for all commuters, which indicates a need to encourage commuter access to the station by other modes.

#### Parking

Participants commented that parking is increasingly challenging along the corridor, and there will be no long-term parking at the new Amtrak station site. The parking garage at TDS is typically full by 7 a.m., and on-street parking time restrictions are not enforced, which contributes to people using on-street spaces for all-day commuter parking. This misuse of on-street parking creates challenges for people trying to access businesses along the corridor. Stakeholders suggested that the city charge for parking at TDS and implement on-street metered parking to better manage the supply.

Additionally, there may be additional parking pressures as Summit Olympus School grows. The school currently enrolls only 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students; as the school expands to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades over the next two years, there will be 200 potential drivers traveling to school daily. The school offers parking only for staff and teachers in its onsite lot and does not plan to offer parking to students. Students currently receive free ORCA transit passes.

Stakeholder recommendations for improving parking conditions along the corridor included the following:

- Consider implementing metered on-street parking.
- Use consistent time limitations for on-street parking (i.e., streamline the mix of times from the current 15-minute, 30-minute, 1-hour, and 2-hour zones).
- Charge for parking at TDS at prices consistent with downtown garages.

## **Freight**

The Puyallup Avenue corridor is home to many businesses that use or rely upon freight vehicles and deliveries. Industrial and freight stakeholders have few complaints about the corridor today and would like to see existing conditions maintained. Specific comments regarding freight included the following:

- Wide lanes make ingress and egress easy for freight vehicles.
- Many vehicles along the corridor are using 53' trailers, which are challenging to turn, including at D Street (which has a high volume of turning freight vehicles).
- Freight restrictions on Highway 99/Eells Street bridge make it faster to take SR 509 through downtown to reach the Port, which involves travel on Puyallup Avenue.
- Alleys formerly provided freight access to businesses but have been closed in recent years, reinforcing the need to maintain access from Puyallup Avenue.
- There is concern that the road will be narrowed to two lanes, which could pose a challenge for freight travel times. The corridor's wide outside lanes work well for freight.

## **Walking**

Stakeholders want the corridor to be safer and more comfortable for pedestrians. Participants identified the following current walking challenges along Puyallup Avenue: missing segments of sidewalk, unmarked crossings, sidewalks that are buckling due to tree roots or other wear and tear, and narrow sidewalks. The industrial (east) end of the corridor is not a place where people feel safe walking, and one participant commented that, "It feels like nobody can see you."

In contrast, participants noted that Dock Street (toward the west end of the corridor) offers a great example of how Puyallup Avenue could look in the future, and feels "like a different world." The Dock Avenue streetscape is friendly for pedestrians and feels like a special district. This project presents an opportunity to continue that feeling onto Puyallup Avenue.

Ideas for improving pedestrian conditions along the corridor included the following:

- Install crosswalks at most intersections, especially busier intersections such as D Street and C Street.
- Consider approaches to increase crossing safety at the intersection of D Street and Puyallup Avenue, which has high volumes of students.
- Implement a school zone or lowered speed limit in some sections of the corridor.
- Make sidewalks wider, nicer, safer, accessible, and more consistent.
- Buffer pedestrians from the road with landscaping or parked cars.
- Install curb bulbs, particularly at the D Street intersection.
- Remove push buttons so that pedestrians are not required to request permission to cross.



- Add pedestrian-scaled lighting, especially in the TOD District; the corridor is busy early, and students arrive at school as early as 7:15 a.m.
- Improve sidewalks from G Street to Portland Avenue where sidewalks are uplifted, cracking, and inaccessible.
- Add trees and landscaping to make the pedestrian experience more pleasant.
- Think carefully about adding seating and places to linger along the corridor, as there are some populations who tend to “hand out” for long periods of time.

## Bicycling

Puyallup Avenue does not currently feel like a welcoming place to bike. Stakeholders noted that the nature of the corridor—as a freight route with a high volume of trucks and buses traveling at high speeds—makes it feel unsafe to bike. A few students bike to school, and some commuters bike to TDS. WSDOT recently funded bike lockers at TDS, but they are underutilized currently.

Puyallup Avenue is currently the only viable east-west bike route in the district, as there is not a bike-friendly, parallel street. S 25<sup>th</sup> Street has Link light rail tracks, which make it challenging for cyclists, and S 26<sup>th</sup> Street has freeway traffic (although is relatively uncongested). Stakeholders believed that more people, including students, would bike along Puyallup Avenue if there were safe bicycle facilities.

To accommodate people on bikes along the corridor, stakeholders offered the following suggestions:

- Improve access for bike commuters to reach Tacoma Dome Station from Dock Street via D Street.
- Develop an end-to-end bike facility that connects to trails at either end.
- Consider a protected bike lane due to heavy traffic volumes, especially freight vehicles and buses.
- Install bike parking on-street for local business access.

## Driving

The two most frequent comments regarding driving on the corridor were suggestions to maintain two lanes in each direction (the current configuration) and to better manage event traffic. There were also suggestions to repave the corridor and make the railroad crossing smoother.

Specific concerns about driving along the corridor today and suggestions for improvements included the following:

- Speed limits are high along the corridor making it less safe for other modes.
- Signal timing with the Sounder train is an issue—when a train is at the station, the gates are down, blocking some intersections for more than 10 minutes.
- The intersection of D Street and Puyallup Avenue routinely backs up during rush hour and also presents an opportunity for a signature crossing that would increase visibility and serve as another entry point to the corridor.
- It is difficult to make a left turn to reach Olympus School, TDS/Greyhound, other driveways along corridor. There is a light at TDS/Greyhound, but it does not have a protected left-turn signal.

- There is very heavy auto traffic during events, and there is concern about reducing the number of travel lanes impacting the corridor's ability to accommodate event traffic. Recent construction-related lane closures on the corridor have presented challenges for drivers.

### **Summit Olympus School**

The Summit Olympus School opened on Puyallup Avenue in 2014 and currently enrolls approximately 200 students. Enrollment will increase to a total of 400 students by 2018. Currently there is no school zone or lowered speed limit near the school. The busiest hours around the school are 8:00-8:20 a.m. and 3:20-3:40 p.m.

Teachers and staff appreciate that a number of destinations are within walking distance of the school, including multiple transit options at TDS and restaurants and businesses at Freighthouse Square. However, there are safety and comfort considerations for students and families near the school, including concerns about transient populations. Many students use the bus stops under the interstate overpass, and lighting at those stops is poor. This is a particular concern during the winter months, when students are arriving and departing in darkness.

Specific ideas for designs to improve pedestrian safety and access to the school include:

- Install a “kiss-and-ride” pick-up/drop-off zone along Puyallup in front of the school.
- Construct curb bulbouts at the corners of D Street and Puyallup Avenue.
- Install flashing lights at unsignalized crossings and consider other visual cues for drivers at all types of crossings.
- Use colorful pavement or markings for crosswalks near the school.
- Install creative designs and public art at the D Street and Puyallup Avenue intersection.
- Designate the area near the school as a school zone and lower the speed limit.

### **Events**

Focus group participants noted that one of the strengths of the Puyallup Avenue corridor is that it is a key point of access to major destinations, with museums, the Tacoma Dome, and entertainment venues nearby, adding to the area's potential to serve as a transit and multimodal hub. However, this mix of destinations—and the volumes of traffic associated with events—can also pose a challenge. Approximately 11,000 people travel by private auto to Dome events, which could pose a challenge for corridor designs that include depaving or a reduction in travel lanes. Parking is also a challenge during events. Stakeholder feedback and recommendations regarding events included the items below:

- Operate shuttles from existing parking garages to support the use of parking further away from the Dome.
- Coordinate with Sound Transit to extend Link operating hours during events. This would allow people to park downtown and take Link to and from events.
- Maintain the corridor as a walkable place during events by managing traffic and making the area feel welcoming and safe for visitors.

## Gateway to Tacoma

The Puyallup Avenue corridor acts as a gateway for people arriving in Tacoma by transit or for events at the Dome. It is also an important connection to downtown, the waterfront, and Foss Waterway. Stakeholders noted that access to these destinations from Puyallup Avenue is among the easiest in downtown Tacoma. Puyallup Avenue also provides a local (avoiding I-5 or SR 509) route to the University of Washington at Tacoma campus for drivers and bicyclists from SR 167.

Stakeholders suggested that the city's image could be enhanced by building upon the corridor's role as a gateway. Many people only see Tacoma from the freeway, but there is an opportunity to change that view when people arrive on Puyallup Avenue. Placemaking opportunities and considerations suggested by stakeholders included the following:

- Add "Welcome to Tacoma" signs at Portland Avenue.
- Continue installing banners and tree wells to help give the Dome District its identity, as many people are likely unfamiliar with the district.
- Add signs and wayfinding both at TDS and along the corridor to help people find the station and other destinations.
- Treat the intersection of D Street and Puyallup Avenue as another gateway and the main point of access to Freighthouse Square, Summit Olympus School, restaurants, other destinations. Consider adding public art, intersection art, and making the intersection festive; students could be engaged to help maintain improvements.
- Look for opportunities to add public spaces and plazas in conjunction with the Freighthouse Square redevelopment and Amtrak Station relocation; explore the potential for farmer's market or small concert space associated with the station plaza.
- Consider adding places to sit along the corridor, but be conscious of the potential to attract loitering. Although WSDOT was previously directed not to provide benches at the new Amtrak station to avoid such a possibility, it may be less of a concern in the future when there are more people living and working on the corridor.
- Ensure funding for maintenance of amenities such as benches and trash cans; there have been issues with overflowing garbage cans on the street in the past.
- Explore opportunities to include students, particularly student ambassadors, in upkeep of amenities such as rain gardens and landscaping.

## Landscaping and Vegetation

Focus group participants expressed a desire to see more landscaping and vegetation along the corridor, as it is currently a "sea of asphalt" with very few trees and almost no other greenery. Suggestions for consideration included the following:

- Add a green buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles.
- Explore the possibility of green space in a median.
- Build wider sidewalks to increase opportunities for installing plantings and sidewalk café dining, for example.
- Find opportunities to "depave" and add landscaping (like the project on McKinley Street in Tacoma) to help soften the look and feel of the corridor and make it feel more like a neighborhood.

## Support Existing Businesses

Stakeholders are interested in corridor improvements that support and preserve existing businesses and investments along Puyallup Avenue. Participants noted that there are important relationships between businesses—for example, between Industrial Tire and nearby trucking companies—that could be impacted by changes to corridor design, function, and land use. Today, people visit the businesses along Puyallup Avenue for specific purposes, such as buying tires; it is not currently a shopping district that attracts customers unfamiliar with the area.

Suggestions for ways the design of the corridor can complement businesses included the following ideas:

- Maintain easy access and egress to businesses.
- Preserve turning radii for large trucks.
- Add on-street bike parking to improve bike access to small businesses.
- Widen sidewalks to support café seating.
- Make left turns to access businesses easier and safer.
- Manage parking (by installing on-street meters and instituting paid parking at TDS) to help people access businesses by car.

## Unique Character

Finally, stakeholders noted that the Puyallup Avenue corridor has a unique and historic character that should be preserved and emphasized. Specifically, focus group participants shared the following comments and suggestions:

- Recognize the diverse land use contexts along the corridor, and treat the three distinct areas somewhat differently.
- Preserve the industrial nature of the corridor and historic views of the Foss Waterway.
- Continue to increase density along the corridor, including new residential development.
- Maintain the character of the area. The industrial vibe is “cool,” and it shouldn’t feel like a “cookie-cutter” neighborhood.

## 3 COMMUNITY SURVEYS

### METHODOLOGY

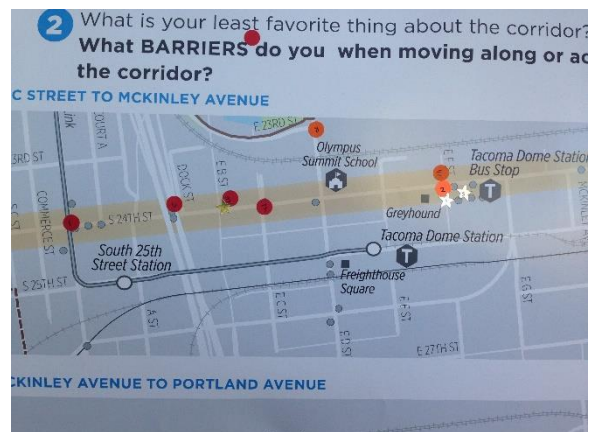
The goal of the community survey was to hear from people who drive, take the bus, walk, and bicycle along Puyallup Avenue today, and to gather input about challenges they encounter and opportunities to address those challenges.

The community survey included two parts: 1) a series of multiple choice questions about use of and priorities for the Puyallup Avenue Corridor (see Appendix B); and 2) an interactive mapping exercise. The mapping exercise asked respondents to indicate points along the Puyallup Avenue corridor where they had experienced a barrier or had an idea for improvement.

Survey responses were gathered using two methods:

**Pop-up kiosks with intercept surveys** were used at three locations in mid-October. The project team conducted intercept surveys at Tacoma Dome Station bus boarding area on October 19 during the morning commute, at Tacoma Dome Station Sounder boarding area on October 20 during the morning commute, and at the Broadway Farmers Market on October 20. Ninety people completed the survey during these three pop-up engagements.

**Online surveys** were available from October 18 to November 4. The online survey was advertised on the City of Tacoma's main website, the project website, with an e-blast to the project's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members and stakeholders, and on social media in coordination with the City's Media and Communications Office. The online survey had 212 responses.



Pop-Up Kiosk Mapping

## PUYALLUP AVENUE CORRIDOR CONCEPTUAL PLAN | COMMUNITY INPUT

### City of Tacoma

#### PUYALLUP AVENUE CORRIDOR DESIGN



City of Tacoma

#### HOW'S IT MOVING ON PUYALLUP AVENUE?

What's your favorite place on Puyallup Avenue? Your least favorite? Where do you feel unsafe?

Zoom in to the map, select "Place Point" and mark down a BARRIER or an IDEA inside the blue box. Click on existing points to agree, disagree or add your own comment.



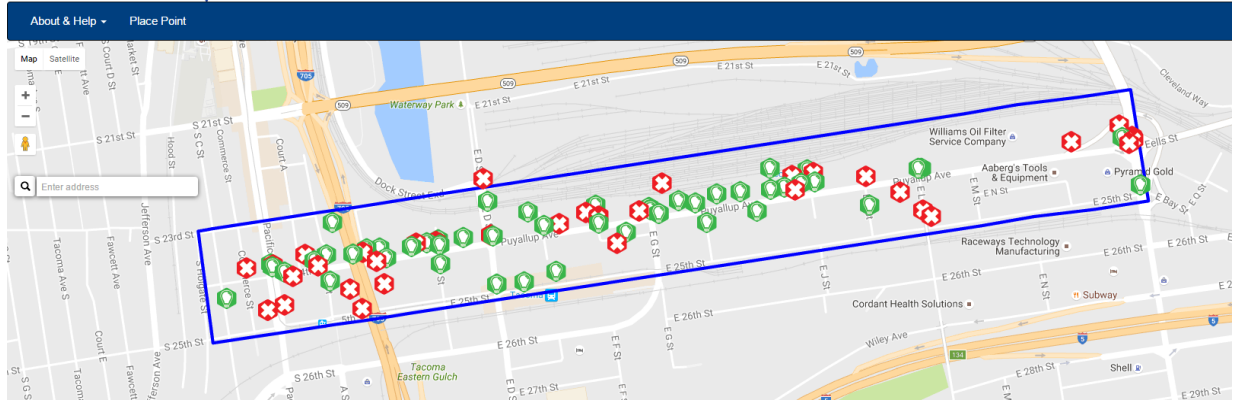
#### IDEAS

When you think about walking, bicycling, taking transit, driving, or parking along Puyallup Avenue, what IDEAS do you have for improving the corridor?



#### BARRIERS

What is your least favorite thing about the corridor? What BARRIERS do you experience?



Interactive Online Map

## TRAVEL BEHAVIOR TODAY

More than a third of survey respondents travel Puyallup Avenue daily, and another third visit or spend time on the corridor a few times per month. Almost half the survey respondents typically use Puyallup Avenue during peak commuting hours, and 75 percent usually drive to the corridor. Once they arrive, nearly half drive around the corridor, while 23 percent walk and 18 percent take transit.

When all surveys are considered together, nearly half the respondents use Puyallup Avenue for commuting via Tacoma Dome Station. However, many of the surveys were completed at Tacoma Dome Station pop-up kiosks during the morning commute. When those surveys are removed from the analysis, only 36 percent of respondents use Puyallup Avenue for commuting.

The second most common reason for being on Puyallup Avenue was "Other." Common themes that emerged from those responses were that people use the corridor to reach entertainment and/or recreational destinations and commute by means other than travel through Tacoma Dome Station.



Figure 3-1 How often do you visit or spend time on Puyallup Avenue?

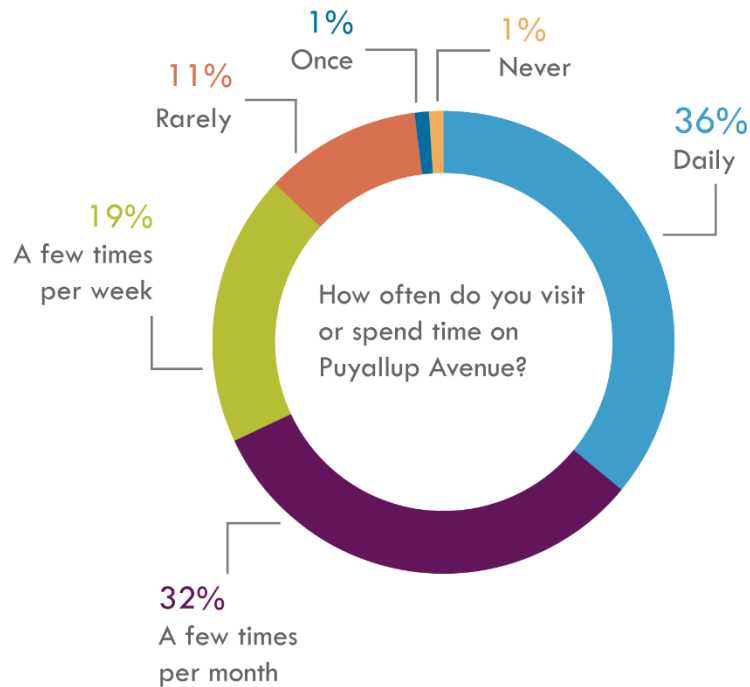


Figure 3-2 What times of the day are you usually on Puyallup Avenue?

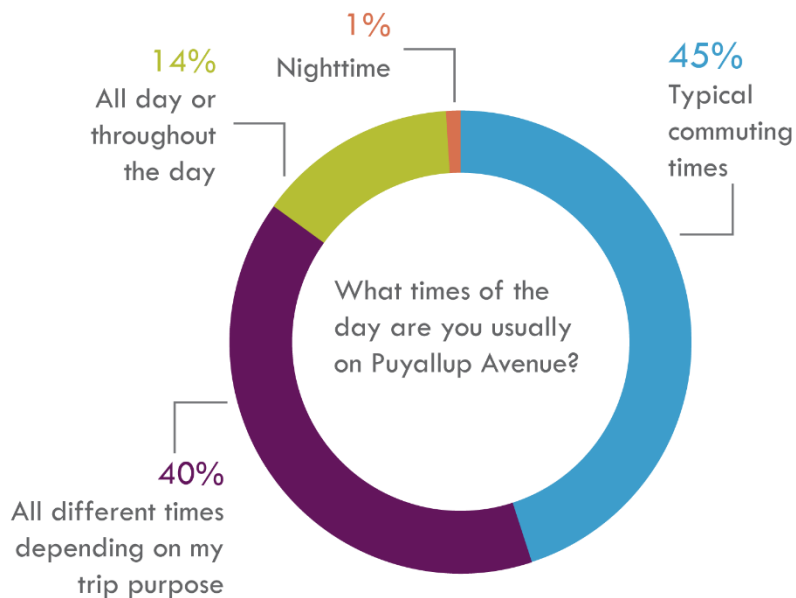


Figure 3-3 How do you typically travel to Puyallup Avenue?

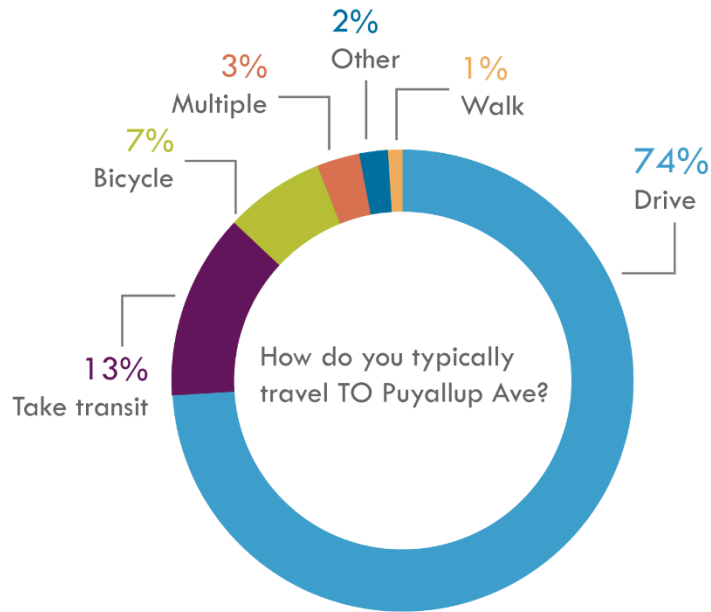


Figure 3-4 Once you're on Puyallup Ave, how do you get around?

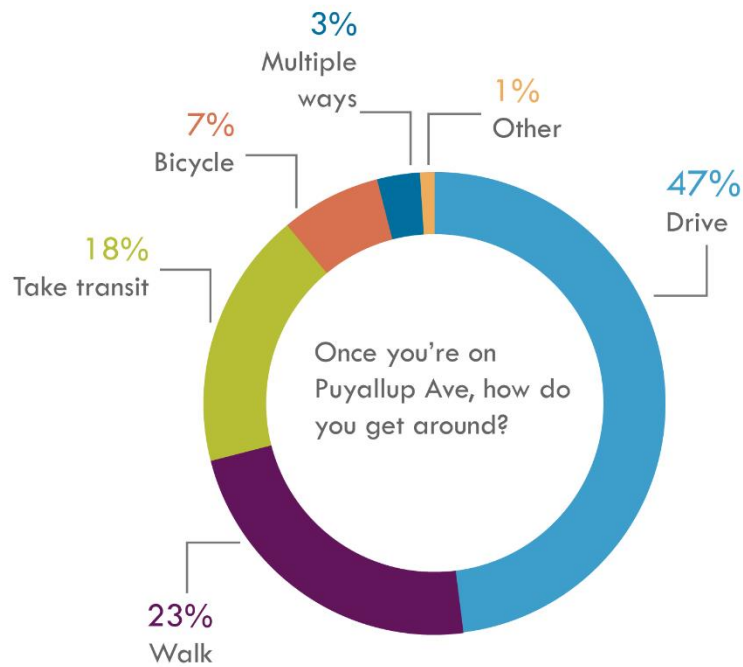


Figure 3-5 What typically brings you to Puyallup Avenue? (All surveys)

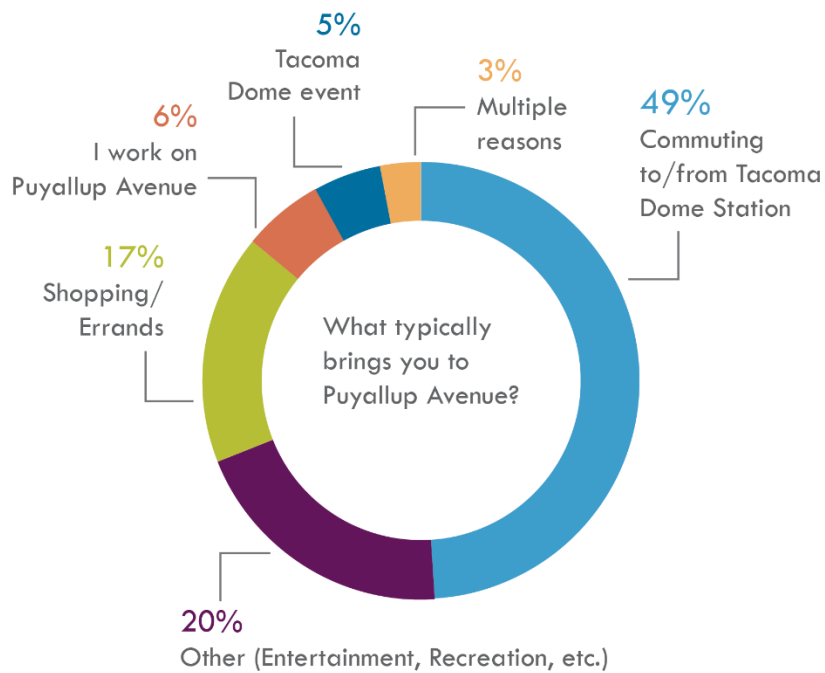
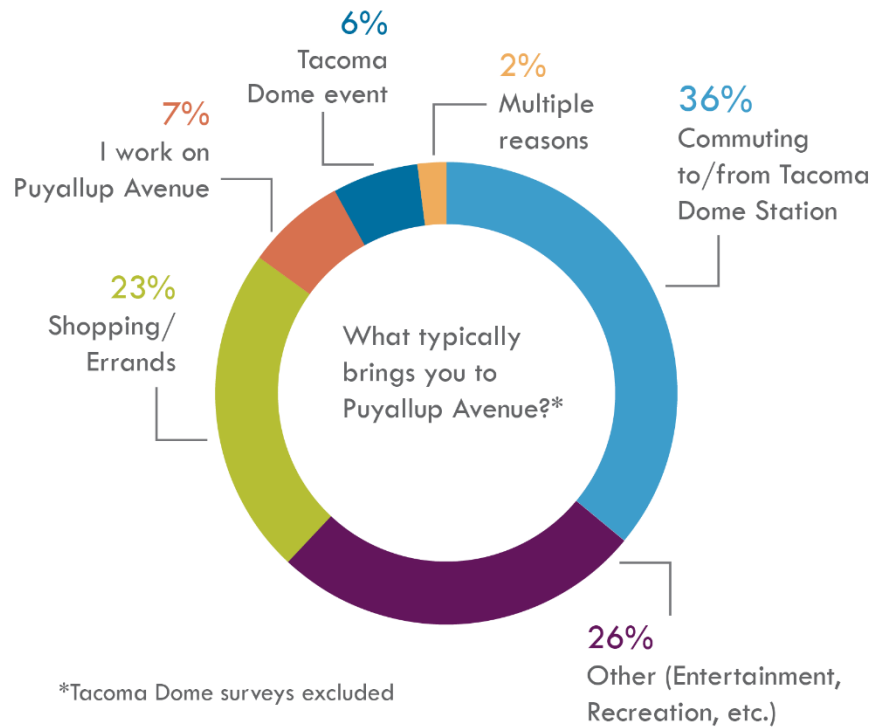


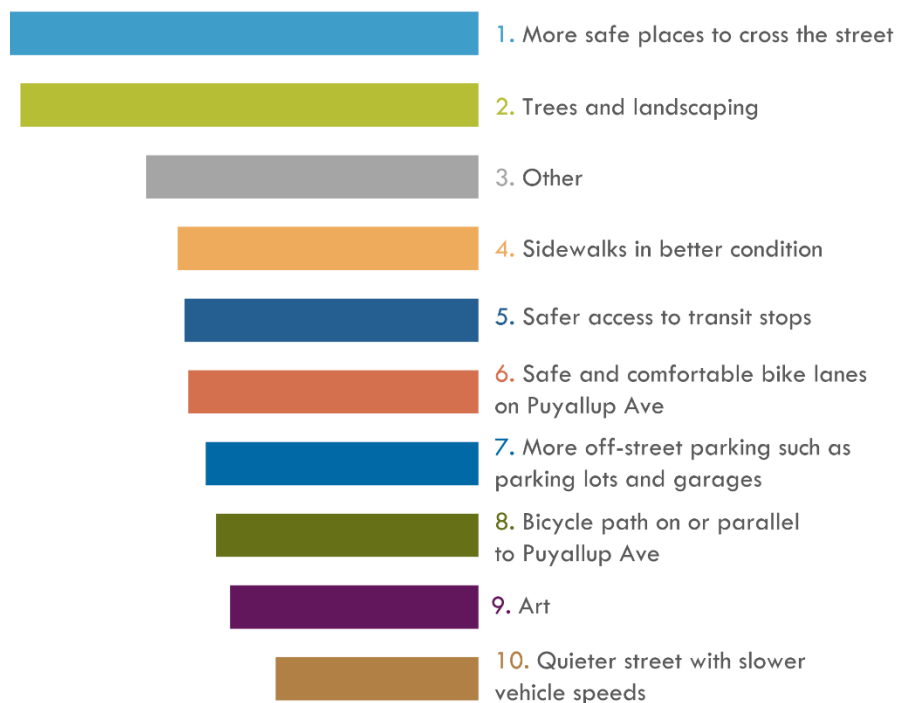
Figure 3-6 What typically brings you to Puyallup Avenue? (Surveys conducted at Tacoma Dome Station excluded)



## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Survey respondents chose from a list of 18 transportation improvements—categorized as Walking, Placemaking, Bicycling, Driving and Parking, Freight, Transit, or Other—to answer the question, “In terms of transportation, what are the TOP FIVE things that would make Puyallup Avenue more attractive to you?” The top priority was, “More safe places to cross the street.” “Trees and landscaping” was the second most common response. People who chose “Other” mentioned a desire for improvements such as safety, street lights, storefront improvements, more retail/mixed use destinations, better transit/pedestrian/bike connections, road maintenance (specifically potholes), noise (trains and construction), parking, and gateway features.

Figure 3-7 Top 10 transportation priorities



When priorities are summarized by the category of improvement type, Placemaking and Walking improvements had the most responses; however, this is not a clear indication of priority, as the Placemaking category also had the largest number of response options. (There were five response options in the Placemaking category, four in Walking, four in Driving and Parking, three in Bicycling, and one each in Transit and Freight.) The desire of survey respondents for Placemaking and Walking improvements—and the priority placed on these types of improvements—is also reflected in the individual priority rankings and in the nature of the “Other” responses to this question.

Figure 3-8 Prioritization by improvement type category

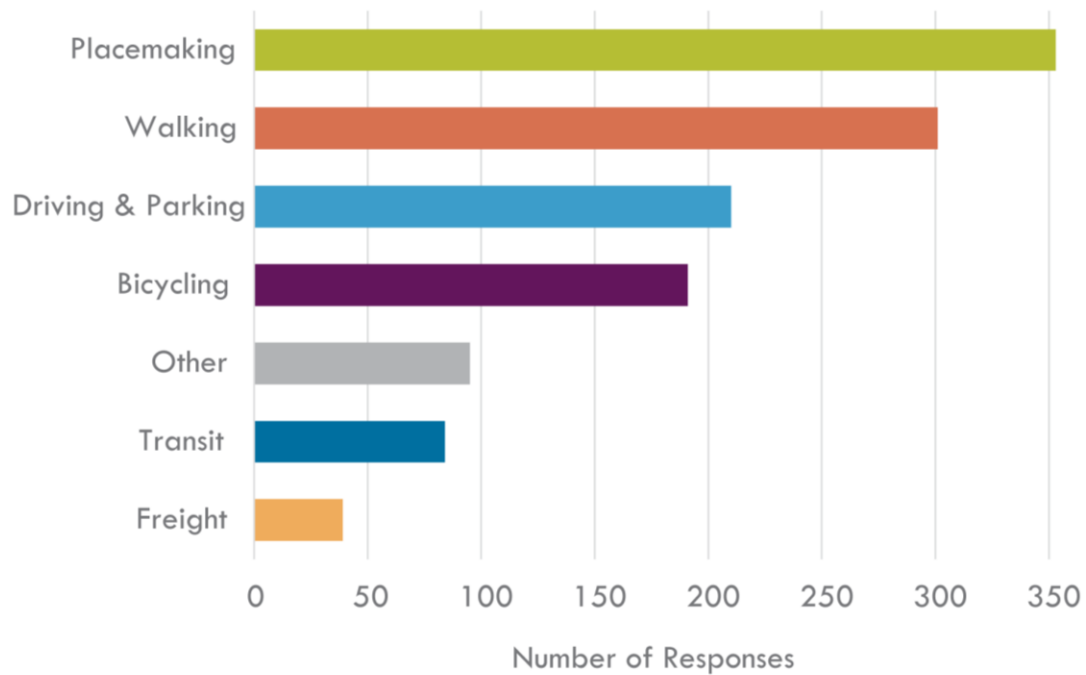
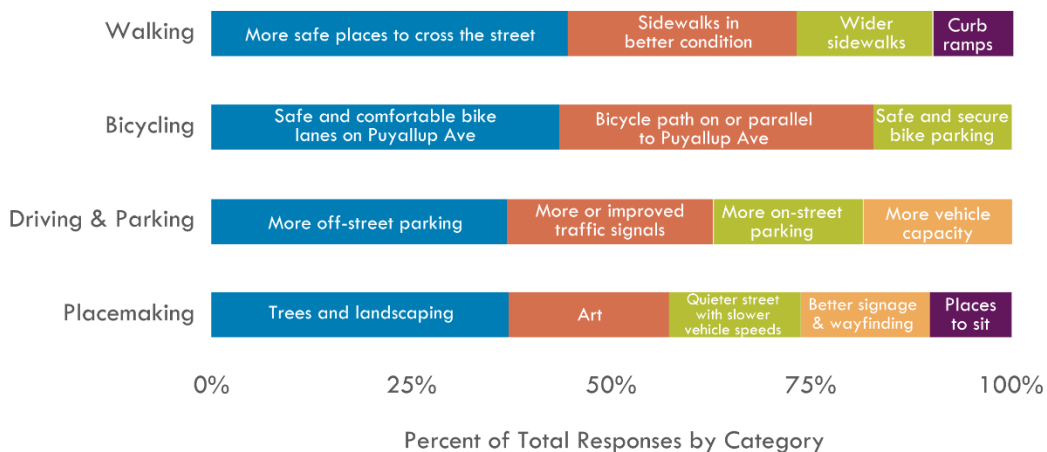
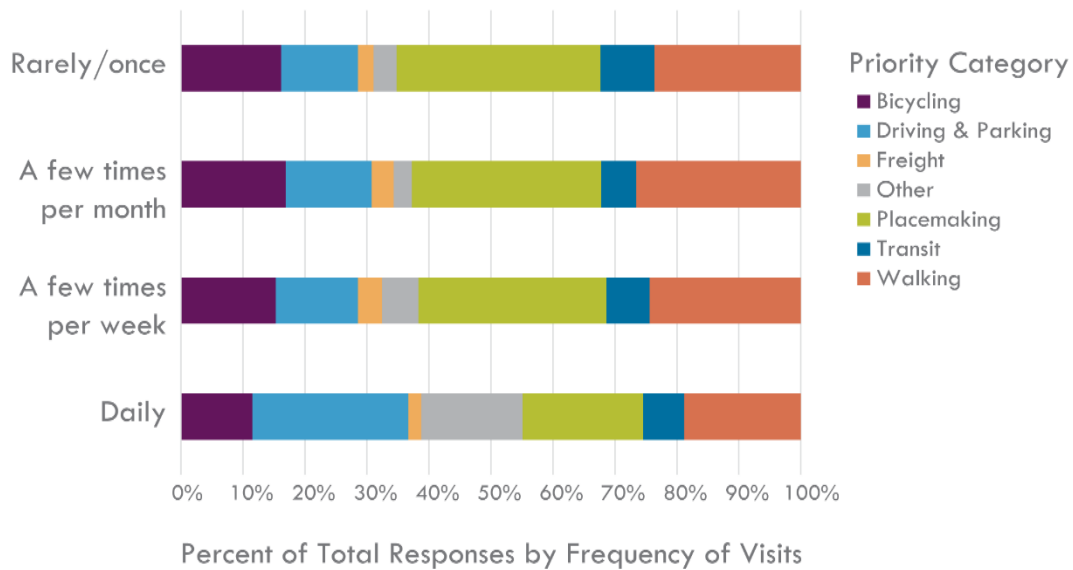


Figure 3-9 Individual improvement priorities by category



When respondents' priorities are analyzed by the frequency with which a person uses the Puyallup Avenue corridor, the main differences are between those who use the corridor daily and those who visit less often. Daily corridor users chose the open-ended "Other" option much more frequently and described specific ideas for improvements, many of which related to land use. Daily corridor users were also much more likely to prioritize parking and driving-related improvements than those who use the corridor occasionally.

Figure 3-10 Transportation priorities by how often respondent visits the corridor



## MAPPING ANALYSIS

Respondents placed a total of 89 points on corridor maps, including both the online map and printed maps at the pop-up kiosks. Fifty of those points were “Ideas” and 39 were “Barriers.” On the online map, people were able to “Agree” or “Disagree” and comment on the points placed by other respondents. There were 123 such comments added to the 89 original points.

Figure 3-11 Interactive map results sized by the number of “I Agree” responses

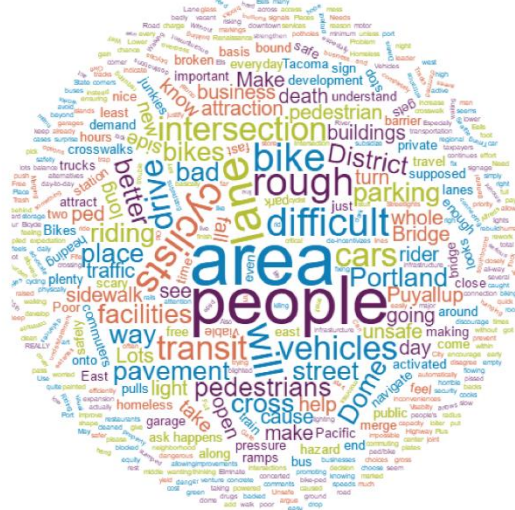


Major intersections along the corridor attracted clusters of both barriers and ideas, and the points at intersections were the ones that received the most “I Agree” comments from other respondents. Between intersections, the segment of Puyallup Avenue between Pacific Street and D Street had the largest number of points and comments. The two most agreed with and commented upon points were at the intersections of Puyallup Avenue and G Street and the intersection of Puyallup Avenue and Pacific Street. At G Street, respondents identified the combination of high vehicle speeds, congestion, and a lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as factors making the intersection feel unsafe. At Pacific Street, respondents noted a need for placemaking improvements and revitalization.



The word clouds in Figure 3-12 and Figure 3-13 present the key themes that emerged in comments associated with ideas and barriers. Words are sized by how often they were mentioned by respondents and call attention to opportunities to improve parking, traffic, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian access along Puyallup Avenue.

**Figure 3-13 Word Cloud of Barriers**



### At Pacific Street:

- At East D Street:**

- ### At East G Street:

- Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates Inc. | 3-9

- Vacant buildings
- Synchronized traffic signals for better traffic flow

**At McKinley Street:**

- Sidewalks
- Curbs

**At Portland Avenue:**

- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Rush hour transit priority lane for I-5 access

In addition to providing suggestions for specific locations, respondents identified common ideas and barriers within each of the corridor's three districts.

**Neighborhood District (South C Street to East D Street):**

- Ideas
  - Wider sidewalks
  - Fewer driveways/curb cuts
  - Stormwater management
  - Crosswalks
  - Street lighting
  - Mixed-use and retail development
  - Art
  - Streetscaping
  - Bike lanes or two-way cycle track
  - Better connections to trails, downtown, waterfront, and transit
  - Paid parking on side streets as an alternative to parking on Puyallup Avenue
- Barriers
  - Rough pavement and lack of bicycle facilities
  - Potholes
  - Lack of crosswalks

**TOD District (East D Street to East G Street):**

- Ideas
  - Better access and non-vehicular connections to Tacoma Dome Station
  - Better sidewalks
  - More parking and charge for parking
  - Cycle track
  - Pedestrian crossing signage at parking garage exit
- Barriers
  - Storefront improvements needed
  - Lack of pedestrian crossings

**Industrial District (East G Street to Portland Avenue):**

- Ideas
  - Sidewalks
  - Transit lanes
  - Better lighting
  - More retail
  - Traffic/pedestrian signals
  - Alternative parking for freight trucks
  - Drop-off zone
  - More crossings
- Barriers
  - Railroad tracks
  - Poor visibility
  - Rough pavement
  - Poor quality sidewalks
  - High speed merging

## 4 CHARRETTE

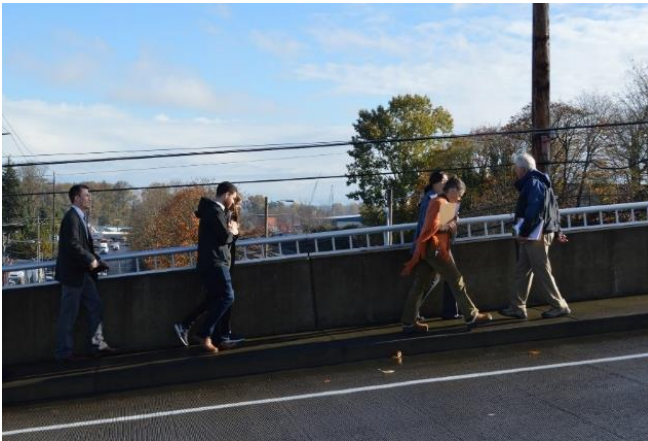
The project team hosted a day-long charrette in November, inviting the community to learn about the project, experience the corridor, and help to formulate ideas that will be shaped into preliminary alternatives. The charrette was hosted by the City of Tacoma and facilitated by the consultant team. The following sections summarize the approach to the charrette and the day's key outcomes and design concepts.

### METHODOLOGY

The charrette was held at the La Quinta Inn and Suites on November 9, 2016. Key stakeholders, technical advisory committee members, and members of the public were invited to attend. City of Tacoma staff promoted the charrette through social media, email listservs, the City of Tacoma's main webpage, the project website, and with advertisements in the Tacoma News Tribune. The workshop included two sessions:

- Morning: Stakeholder Design Charrette and Site Walk from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Evening: Public Open House and Design Charrette from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

### Morning Session



Walking toward Puyallup Avenue during stakeholder site walk



Morning presentation of site redesign ideas

The morning session was open to project area stakeholders and the project's technical advisory committee and consisted of the following elements:

- A presentation introducing the project and Street Design 101 concepts
- Puyallup Avenue site walk and discussion of issues and opportunities
- Site redesign with stakeholders and presentation of recommendations

## Evening Session



Presentation to community members during evening session



Public open house and design session

The evening session was open to members of the public as well as project stakeholders and technical advisory committee members. The evening agenda included the following elements:

- A presentation introducing the project, street design concepts, and an overview of ideas generated during the morning session
- Public open house and design session

## Participants

### Morning Stakeholder Design Charrette and Site Walk Participants

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ Bob Myrick, Tacoma Wheelman's Bicycle Club                  | ▪ Mark D'Andrea, City of Tacoma (Project Manager) |
| ▪ Josh Diekmann, City of Tacoma                               | ▪ Dan Seabrands, City of Tacoma                   |
| ▪ Chelsea Levy, Sound Transit                                 | ▪ Chris Wilson, City of Tacoma                    |
| ▪ Sue O'Neill, City of Tacoma                                 | ▪ Tina Dunn, City of Tacoma                       |
| ▪ Andrew Austin, Tacoma Parks                                 | ▪ Jennifer Wieland, Nelson\Nygaard                |
| ▪ Jori Adkins, Dome District, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council | ▪ Stephanie Wright, Nelson\Nygaard                |
| ▪ Rick Semple, Dome District, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council | ▪ Matt Berkow, Nelson\Nygaard                     |
| ▪ Liz Kaster, Puyallup Watershed Initiative                   | ▪ Jody Trendler, Nelson\Nygaard                   |
| ▪ Evette Mason, Port of Tacoma                                | ▪ Michael Horntvedt, Parsons                      |
| ▪ Janice McNeal, Dome District                                | ▪ Mike Koski-Harja, Swift Company                 |
|   | ▪ Barbara Swift, Swift Company                    |
|   | ▪ Alayna Linde, EnviroIssues                      |

### Evening Public Open House and Design Charrette Participants

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ▪ Earl Emerson, U.S. Geological Survey       | ▪ Mark D'Andrea, City of Tacoma (Project Manager) |
| ▪ Bob Myrick, Tacoma Wheelman's Bicycle Club | ▪ Jennifer Wieland, Nelson\Nygaard                |



- James Coffman, City of Tacoma
- Peter Baker, community member
- Betsy Baker, community member
- Jim Merritt, Merritt Architecture PLLC
- John Thurlow, Transportation Commission
- Evette Mason, Port of Tacoma
- Gary Hofmann, Tacoma Transload
- Christine Pemberton, Western Builders Supply
- Lowell Wyse, Sustainable Tacoma Commission
- Steve Brown, community member
- David Cook, Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group
- Stephanie Wright, Nelson\Nygaard
- Matt Berkow, Nelson\Nygaard
- Jody Trendler, Nelson\Nygaard
- Mike Koski-Harja, Swift Company
- Angie Thomson, EnviroIssues

## SITE WALK

Stakeholders spent an hour walking several blocks of Puyallup Avenue as part of the morning session. The site walk allowed people to experience the east end of the corridor on foot and generate ideas for improvements. Participants were divided into two groups, with a member of the project team leading each. The walking route was approximately one mile and traveled along Portland Avenue, Puyallup Avenue between East L Street and Portland Avenue, East L Street, and East 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Stakeholders took notes about what they liked about the project area, what they disliked, and what changes they would recommend for Puyallup Avenue.



Site walk participants



Puyallup Avenue site walk



## Site Walk Debrief

After the site walk, the project team led a discussion about what does and doesn't work well on the east end of Puyallup Avenue today. These issues and opportunities were used to inform design ideas that will help to shape preliminary alternatives for the corridor.

### What works best on Puyallup Avenue:

- Sidewalk is continuous, ADA ramps are present at many intersections
- People are walking and using the corridor
- Wide curb lane provides room for “experienced” cyclists to ride in traffic
- A lot of right-of-way means there is a lot of potential
- Robust employment in industrial, commercial, manufacturing, and retail
- Nice views to the west
- Free moving vehicles, able to get easily from point A to point B

### What doesn't work well on Puyallup Avenue:

- Traffic speed and noise
- Poor drainage on curb/sidewalk
- Crossing is daunting
- Few parking signs and minimal striping
- Driveway widths and slope
- It doesn't feel safe to be on foot
- Bus stops are lacking shelters
- Portland Avenue and Puyallup Avenue intersection needs improvements

### Stakeholder design priorities:

- Bike facilities that are safe for all riders
- More frequent crossing opportunities
- Narrower lanes
- Slower traffic
- Shortened crossing distance
- Separate pedestrians better from traffic, with planting strip or parking
- Widen sidewalks

After identifying issues and opportunities, participants worked in small groups to redesign three blocks of Puyallup Avenue. The following sections present highlights of the design ideas.

## DESIGN IDEAS

Participants in both the morning and evening sessions were organized into small groups and asked to develop design options for Puyallup Avenue at locations representing the corridor's three districts: Pacific Avenue in the Neighborhood District, F Street in the TOD District, and L Street in the Industrial District. Preliminary designs, cross-sections, and notes for each location are presented below.

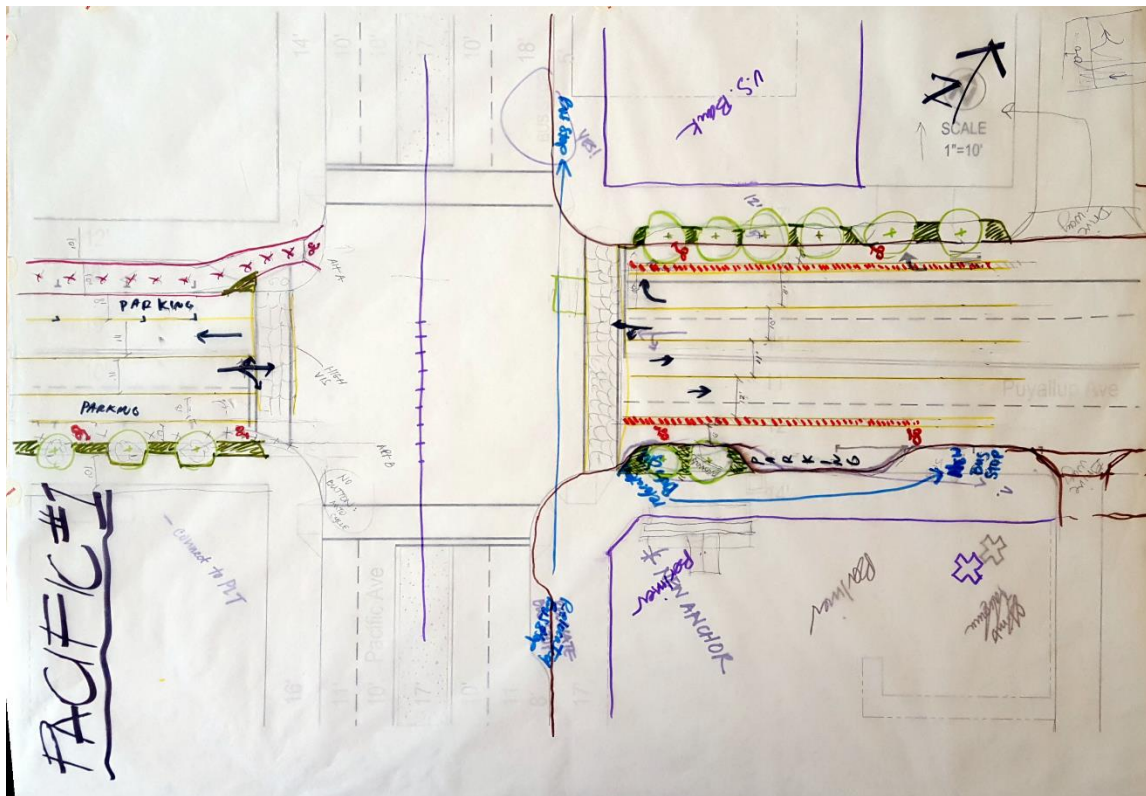
## Puyallup Avenue at Pacific Avenue



Preliminary designs for Puyallup Avenue at Pacific Avenue are shown in Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2. Key opportunities identified for this area included a focus on a bike connection to the Prairie Line Trail and the need for wide sidewalks on Puyallup Avenue.

In redesigning this intersection, the group discussed the volume of right-turning vehicles from Puyallup Avenue (westbound) to Pacific Avenue (northbound), focusing on various approaches to designing a safe and comfortable bike facility to connect to the nearby trail. Markings through the intersection and a bicycle signal were identified as potential design solutions. Participants also recommended that the final design enhance the wide sidewalks in this area and look for opportunities to add greenery.

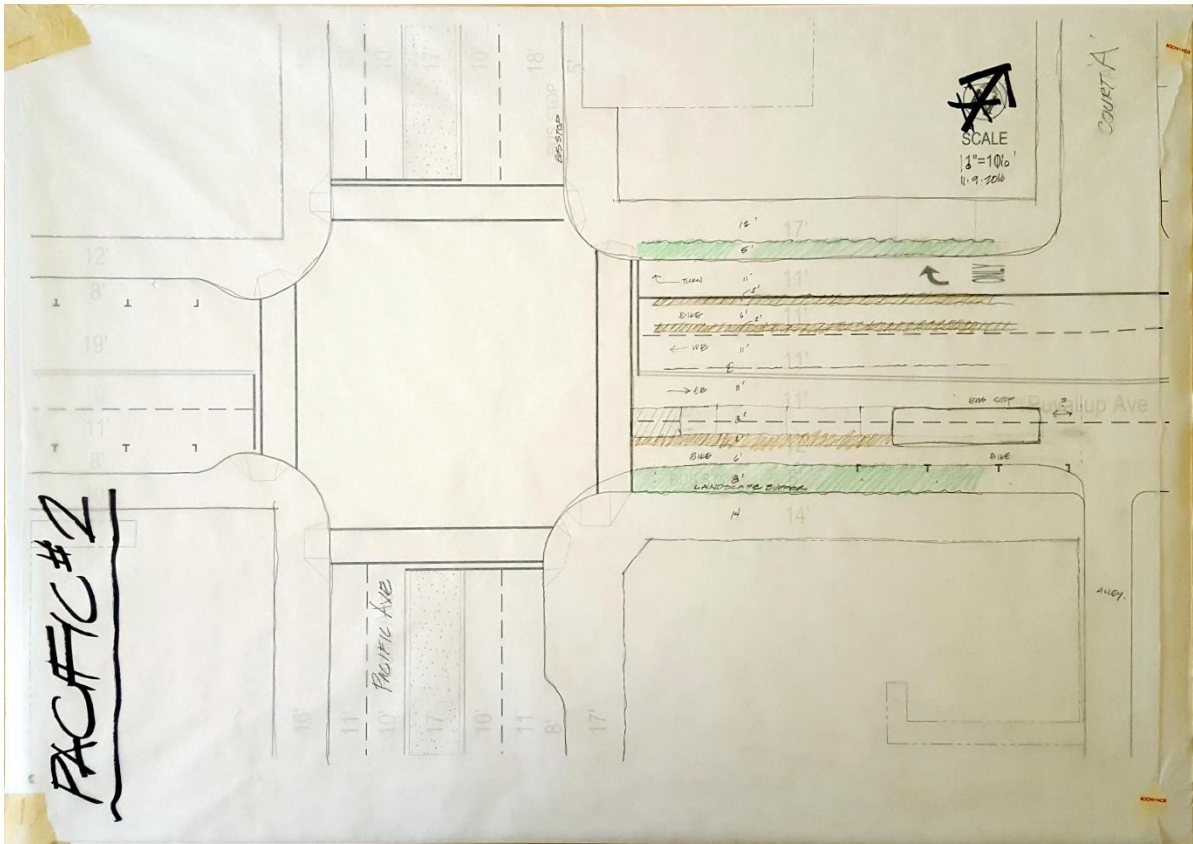
**Figure 4-1 Puyallup Avenue at Pacific Avenue Redesign #1**



Puyallup Avenue at Pacific Avenue Redesign #1 included the following design elements:

- A buffered bike lane the along curb on the north side of Puyallup Avenue, and a buffered bike lane with outside parking on the south side of Puyallup Avenue.
- New landscaping on the north and south sides of Puyallup Avenue to enhance the pedestrian experience and build upon this segment’s wide sidewalks and existing destinations.
- Bus bulbs to facilitate in-lane stops on the south side of Puyallup Avenue, complemented by a “flex zone” that alternates between parking, landscaping, and transit stops.

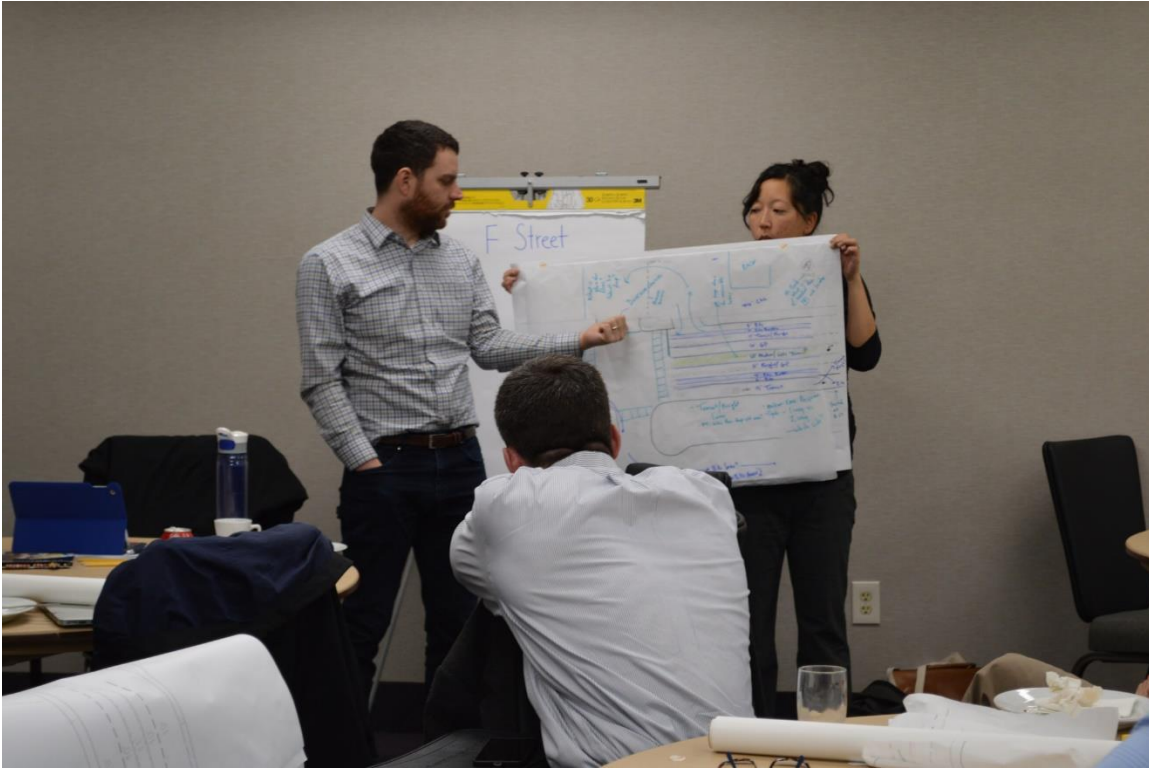
Figure 4-2 Puyallup Avenue at Pacific Avenue Redesign #2



This second option for this area reduces the number of travel lanes to one general purpose lane in each direction. Puyallup Avenue at Pacific Avenue Redesign #2 includes the following elements:

- Maintains the westbound right turn lane onto Pacific Avenue from Puyallup Avenue, and adds a westbound buffered bike lane adjacent to the turn lane on Puyallup Avenue.
- Adds new landscaping to the existing sidewalk on the north side of Puyallup Avenue and to an extended sidewalk on the south side.
- Provides eastbound transit access on Puyallup Avenue via in-lane transit stops using a bus bulb or a floating transit island.
- Maintains parking on the south side of Puyallup Avenue, except at the bus stop.
- Shortens crossing distances across Puyallup and Pacific Avenues by adding curb bulbs and stop bars set back from the intersection.

## Puyallup Avenue at East F Street



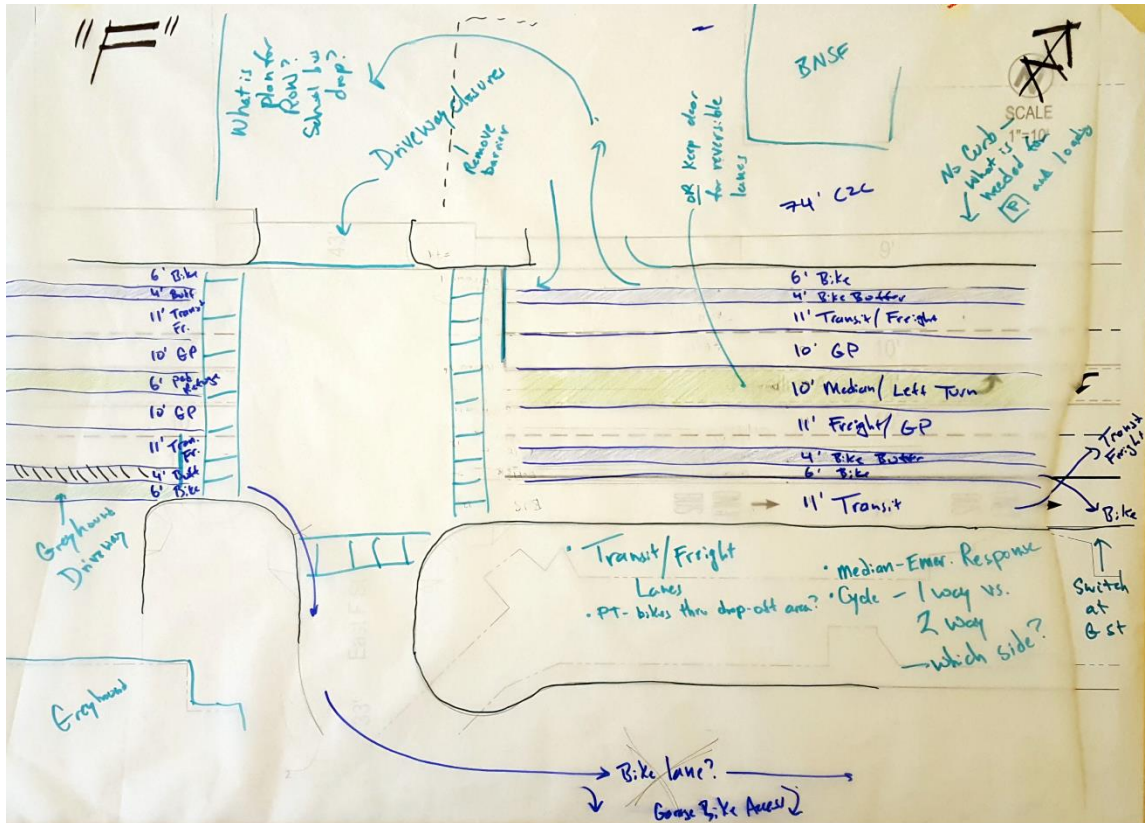
Key issues and opportunities for the intersection of Puyallup Avenue and East F Street (at Tacoma Dome Station) identified by charrette participants included:

- Improved pedestrian crossings of Puyallup Avenue
- In-lane transit stops at Tacoma Dome Station (eastbound)
- Missing sidewalks on north side of Puyallup Avenue
- Wide and underutilized driveways on the north side of Puyallup Avenue
- A one- or two-way cycle track on either side of Puyallup Avenue

Redesign concepts for Puyallup Avenue at East F Street are shown and described below.



Figure 4-3 Puyallup Avenue at East F Street Redesign #1

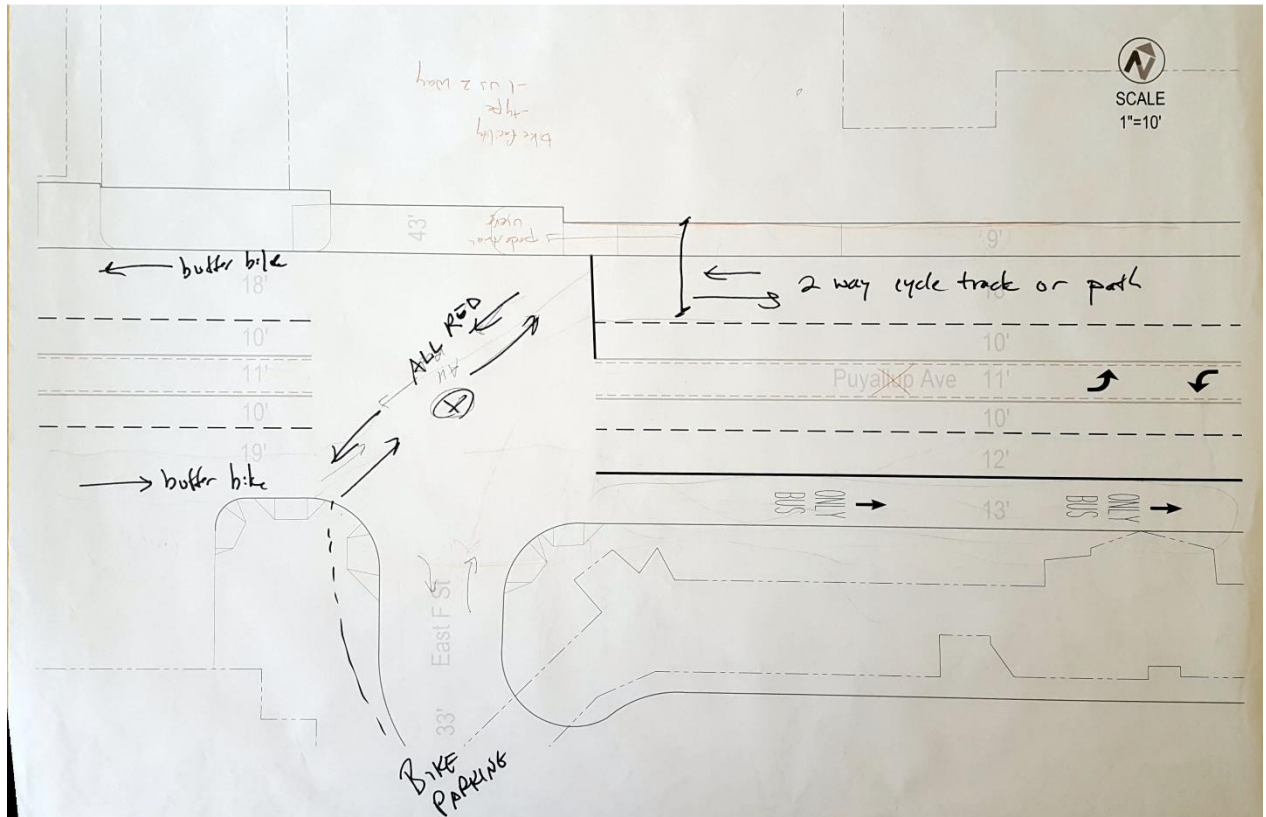


Puyallup Avenue at East F Street Redesign #1 includes the following design elements:

- Adds crosswalks at all intersection legs across Puyallup Avenue to improve pedestrian access to Tacoma Dome Station.
- Closes the driveway on Puyallup Avenue at East F Street on the north side. The adjacent property is owned by BNSF, which raised questions about the future plans for that property.
- Creates an 11-foot wide bus- and freight-only lane in the westbound direction on Puyallup Avenue.
- Adds a one-way 6-foot protected bike lane on both sides of Puyallup Avenue, adjacent to the sidewalk, with a 4-foot buffer between the bike lane and the proposed bus/freight lanes. A bike lane on TDS property was considered but later determined to be undesirable.
- Installs a center median on Puyallup Avenue from East F Street to the east with left turn pockets at intersections. This design raised questions about emergency vehicle needs when a travel lane is bound on both sides by a raised median and bike lane buffers.



**Figure 4-4 Puyallup Avenue at East F Street Redesign #2**



Stakeholders included the following design elements in Puyallup Avenue at East F Street Redesign #2:

- Creates a two-way bike facility on Puyallup Avenue from East F Street to Portland Avenue by removing a travel lane. This design assumes a buffered bike lane on both sides of Puyallup Avenue would continue along the rest of the corridor from East F Street to South C Street.
- Installs an all-red signal with diagonal bike crossing at the intersection of Puyallup Avenue and East F Street to create a safe crossing for eastbound cyclists on the south side of Puyallup Avenue to access the two-way bike lane on the north side of Puyallup Avenue. This would also have safety benefits for pedestrians.
- Adds a left-turn signal and changes channelization at the intersection of Puyallup Avenue and East D Street (not pictured).

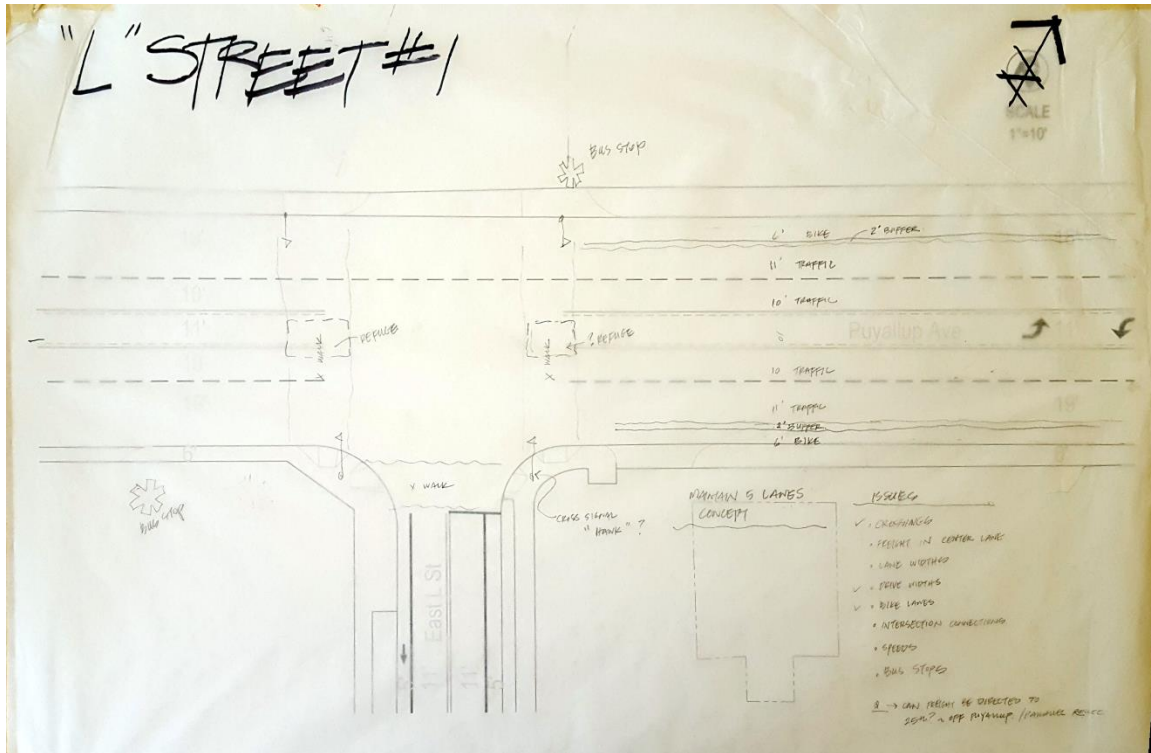
## Puyallup Avenue at East L Street



Participants identified issues and opportunities at the intersection of Puyallup Avenue and East L Street, including the following:

- Improve pedestrian crossing opportunities of Puyallup Avenue
- Respect freight movements
- Add bike facilities on Puyallup Avenue
- Address the high number of driveways on Puyallup Avenue
- Many bus stops along Puyallup Avenue
- Add on-street parking on Puyallup Avenue
- Add trees and landscaping to Puyallup Avenue

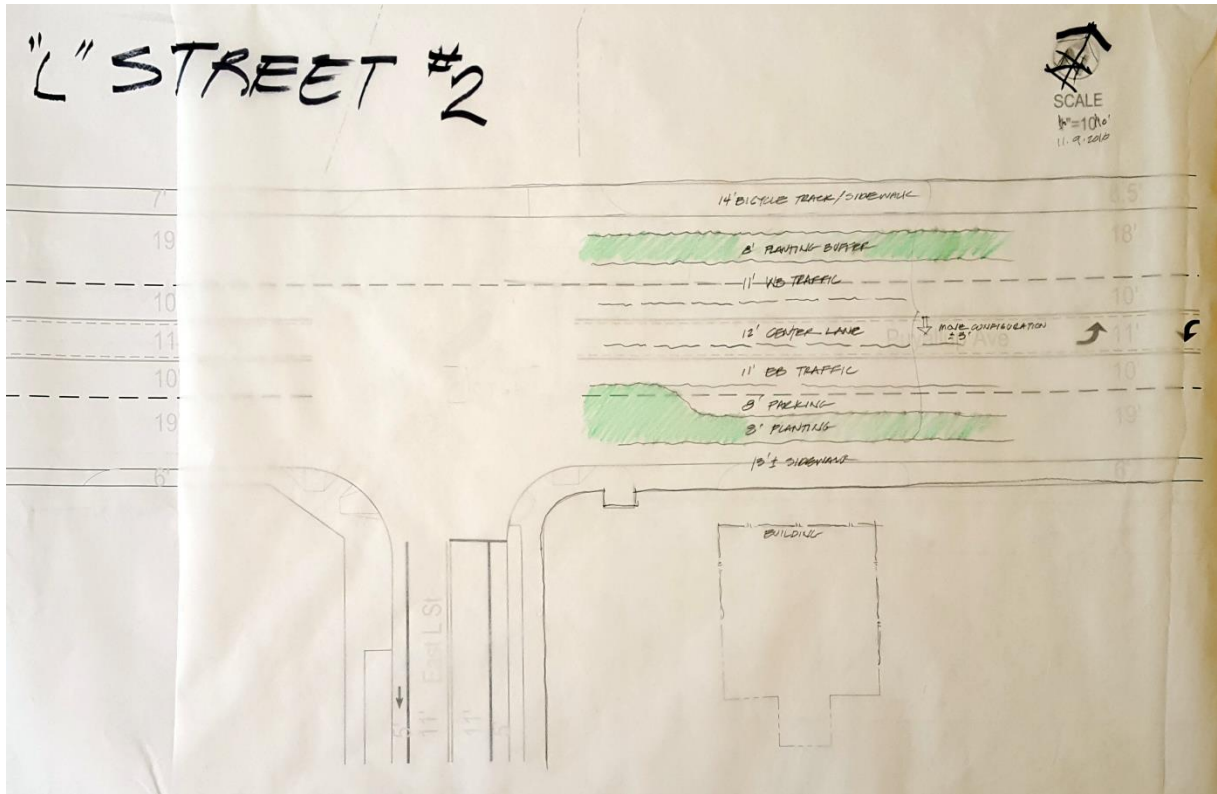
Figure 4-5 Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #1



Key design elements of Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #1 include maintaining the existing configuration of four lanes of general purpose traffic and a center turn lane on Puyallup Avenue. Other elements of the design include:

- A 6-foot buffered bike lane along the curb both eastbound and westbound on Puyallup Avenue.
- Pedestrian refuge islands in the turn lane (or median) of Puyallup Avenue and marked crosswalks to improve pedestrian crossing conditions.

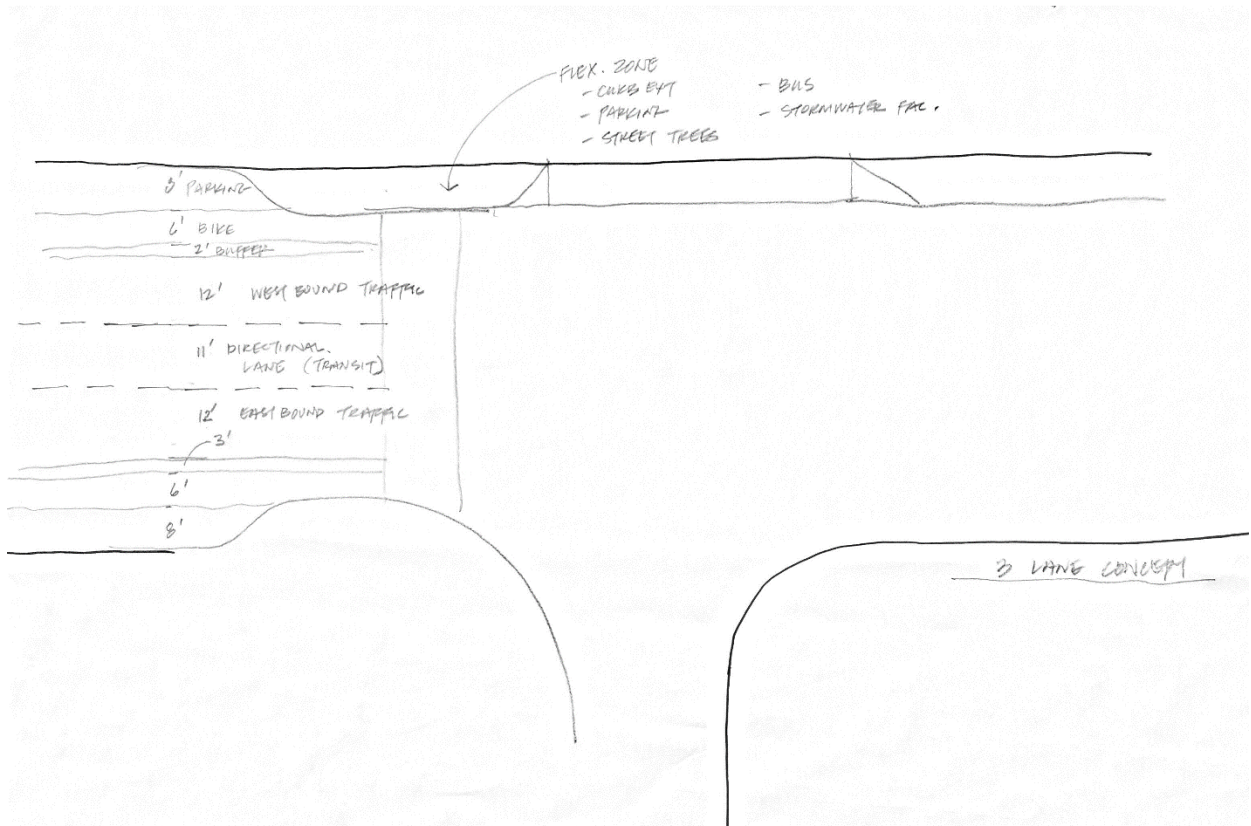
Figure 4-6 Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #2



Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #2 changes the cross-section of Puyallup Avenue to four lanes of general purpose traffic and removes the center turn lane on Puyallup Avenue. It includes the following design elements:

- A 14-foot multi-use path on the north side of Puyallup Avenue for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Narrower 11-foot lanes on Puyallup Avenue.
- A flex zone on the south side of Puyallup Avenue for parking and curb extensions at intersections.

Figure 4-7 Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #3

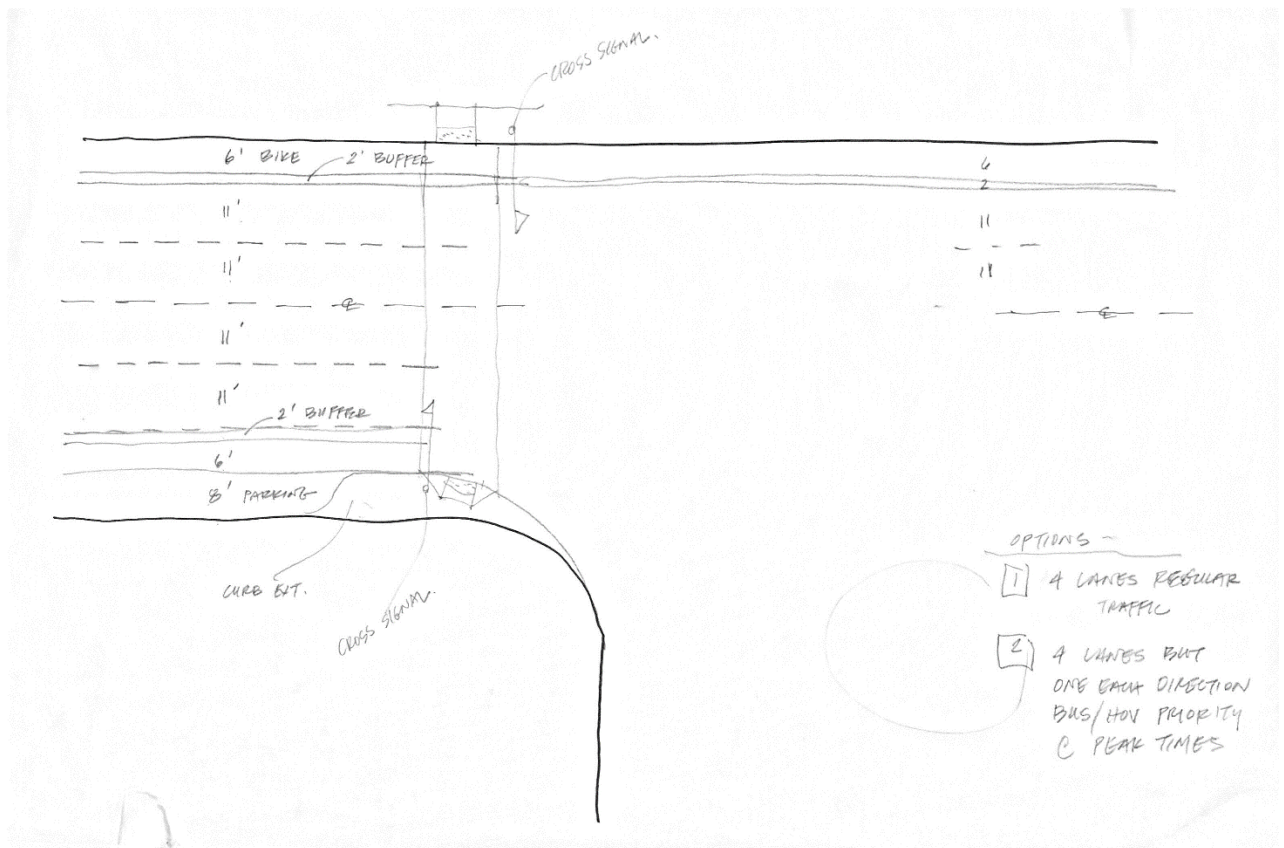


Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #3 proposes reducing the roadway width on Puyallup Avenue to three lanes: two 12-foot traffic lanes and an 11-foot reversible (directional) lane. Other design elements include the following:

- Managed parking on both sides of Puyallup Avenue adjacent to the curb.
- Buffered bike lanes on both sides of Puyallup Avenue, between parking and traffic lanes.
- Adds a flex zone on the north side of Puyallup Avenue alternating between curb extensions, parking, street trees, bus stops, and stormwater facilities.



Figure 4-8 Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #4

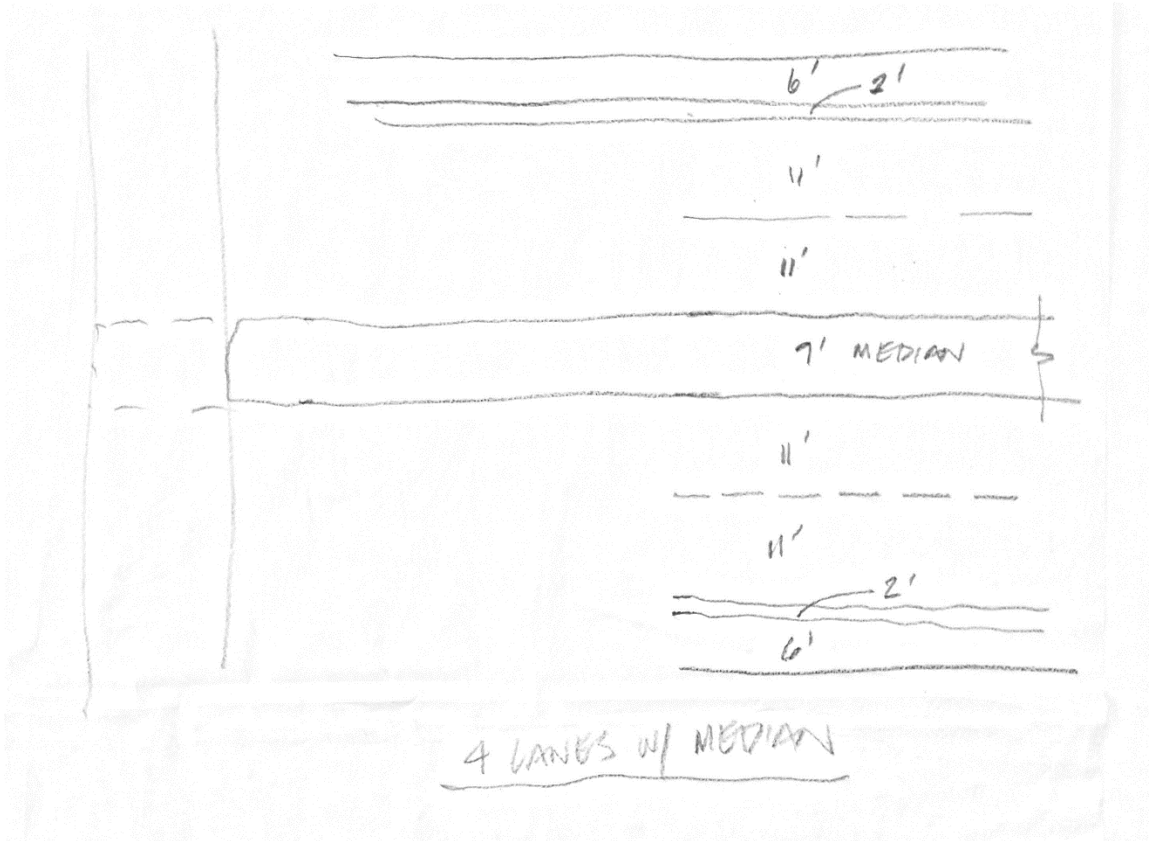


Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #4 proposes four lanes of general purpose traffic or four lanes with one peak-only bus and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) priority lane in each direction on Puyallup Avenue. Other elements of this design are:

- Buffered bike lane on both sides of Puyallup Avenue
- Parking on the south side of Puyallup Avenue adjacent to the curb.



Figure 4-9 Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #5



Puyallup Avenue at East L Street Redesign #5 proposes four lanes of general purpose traffic on Puyallup Avenue, with buffered bike lanes on both sides of the street and a raised median from East L Street to Portland Avenue.

## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Some of corridor's opportunities and challenges were not easily addressed through the design exercises, such as identifying opportunities for parallel streets and stormwater improvements. During both design sessions, participants discussed the function of parallel streets such as East 26<sup>th</sup> Street and East 25<sup>th</sup> Street, and how they will relate to Puyallup Avenue in the future. Suggestions included moving freight or transit to East 25<sup>th</sup> Street or making it a bike- and pedestrian-only street.

Stakeholders noted that drainage and stormwater improvements will need to be at the edge of the street because the street is crowned (i.e., higher at the centerline than at the curb). A landscaped median would not necessarily provide additional stormwater benefits.

## SYNTHESIS



Members of the public provided essential feedback during the design charrette about how they use Puyallup Avenue today and what changes they would like to see along the corridor in the future. Several participants who represented bicycling groups underscored the importance of connecting any new bicycle facilities on Puyallup Avenue with existing and planned bicycle trails at either end of the corridor. Stakeholders also identified opportunities that could also be useful when pursuing funding for complete streets redesign, for example, adding stormwater and drainage improvements.

## 5 COMMUNITY INPUT THEMES

### STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Themes from the stakeholder focus groups were largely supported by data and findings from Tech Memo #1: Baseline Conditions (TM1). The following is a summary of key focus group themes and an assessment of how they support or conflict with data and findings from TM1:

- **Subarea Plan efforts should be realized.** TM1 highlights objectives from the South Downtown Subarea Plan relating to the Puyallup Avenue corridor. Stakeholders helped to develop the Subarea Plan and want to see the ideas in the plan—including the complete streets redesign of Puyallup Avenue—come to fruition.
- **Improve access to TDS for all ages and abilities.** Stakeholders expressed the need for access to TDS for all ages and abilities. TM1 highlights the importance of Tacoma Dome Station as a multimodal transportation hub, especially in light of future residential development and the Amtrak Station relocation.
- **Parking is increasingly an issue** that stakeholders would like to see addressed in the conceptual design. Stakeholders' observations about parking demand and supply on the corridor are in line with data collected for TM1.
- **Wide lanes make easy ingress and egress (for freight and other large vehicles).** Tacoma's Transportation Master Plan designates the corridor as part of the city's primary freight network.
- **Puyallup Avenue must be safer and more comfortable for pedestrians,** especially students. Data on pedestrian conditions, crashes involving pedestrians, and pedestrian volumes on the corridor reinforce the sentiment expressed by stakeholders.
- Stakeholders expressed that Puyallup Avenue doesn't currently feel like a **safe street to bike**. Bicyclist volumes are low on the corridor, and crash data from WSDOT shows an average of one crash per year on the corridor involving bicyclists.
- Preserve the **unique historic and industrial character**. The character of the Puyallup Avenue corridor is reinforced by its zoning designation as warehouse/residential, downtown mixed-use, and light industrial in different segments along the corridor.
- Puyallup Avenue **acts as a gateway** for people arriving in Tacoma by transit or for events. Surveys conducted by the Tacoma Dome show that 50% of event-goers are first time visitors to Tacoma.
- Finally, stakeholders expressed a desire to **make Puyallup Avenue feel like a place**. Existing conditions along the corridor include placemaking elements (e.g., tree grates, banners, murals) that add a sense of identity to the corridor, along with elements that diminish the feeling of place (e.g., auto-oriented lighting and minimal streetscaping, street furniture, or public art).

## COMMUNITY SURVEY THEMES

The following is a summary of themes expressed by the community in the online and intercept survey responses:

- The corridor **lacks destinations, and feels unsafe and neglected**. Respondents recommended retail and mixed-use development, storefront improvements, gateway features, street lighting, landscaping and better street maintenance.
- There is a **need for pedestrian crossings and improved sidewalks** throughout the corridor.
- Bicyclists face a number of **barriers to safely navigating Puyallup Avenue** and would benefit from bike lanes or cycle tracks, intersection improvements, and better connections to trails.
- The experience of transit riders could be improved by **better connections** for people walking, bicycling, and transferring to the Tacoma Dome Station, and by safe pick-up and drop-off locations.
- **Parking in the area** is a big concern, with many different ideas for how it should be addressed.
- Respondents recognize the importance of Puyallup as a freight corridor but would like to see **alternate routes for freight traffic** to reach area highways.

## CHARRETTE THEMES

The charrette generated ideas that will be shaped into preliminary alternatives for the design of the corridor. Preliminary designs addressed the following opportunities along Puyallup Avenue:

- **Pedestrian crossings.** During the site walk, stakeholders observed transit customers crossing the street mid-block to reach a bus stop. High volumes of transit activity on the corridor underscore the importance of providing safe crossings for pedestrians. Stakeholders and community members addressed pedestrian crossings in the corridor redesigns and discussions. Their designs ideas to improve pedestrian crossings included adding crosswalks, closing inactive driveways, and adding curb bulbs to shorten crossing distances.
- **Freight movements.** Stakeholders and community members expressed a desire to retain and enhance freight movements along the corridor. One design offered a unique transit- and freight-only lane as a way to separate freight traffic from general purpose traffic.
- **Lane widths.** Charrette participants addressed lane widths in their designs, typically reducing lane widths to 10 or 11 feet, in order to slow traffic and accommodate other uses in the right-of-way such as bicycle facilities.
- **Traffic speeds.** During the site walk, participants noted that high traffic speeds create a less-welcoming environment for people on the sidewalk.
- **Driveway widths.** In many places along the corridor there are large numbers of wide driveways, creating potential hazards for people walking along the sidewalk. Design solutions included closing inactive driveways and reducing driveway widths where appropriate.

- **Bike facilities.** There was unanimous support for adding bike facilities to the corridor. Ideas included one- or two-way protected bike lanes, on one or both sides of the street. Challenges for adding bike facilities include high turn volumes at key intersections and the large number of driveways noted above. A key opportunity will be connecting bicyclists with the Prairie Line Trail on the west end of the corridor and the trail to Fife on the east end.
- **Bus stops.** Several design concepts added bus stops along the corridor by suggesting floating transit islands or curb bulbs to support in-lane transit vehicle stops.
- **Parking.** On-street parking was included in many of the designs. A flex zone that alternates between parking, landscaping, and transit bulbs was added to both sides of the street in different parts of the corridor.

# Appendix A Stakeholder Interview Guide

## Stakeholder Interview Questions

- How do you use Puyallup Avenue today? How often?
- What do you like about Puyallup Ave today? What works well?
- What don't you like about the corridor? What doesn't work so well?
- What should be considered for the future of Puyallup Avenue? What's your vision for the corridor?
- What are the barriers to achieving that vision? What's holding us back?
- Who is key to achieving the vision?
- If we could do only one thing to improve the corridor, what should it be?
- What suggestions do you have for engaging the public and stakeholders? Are there specific individuals or organizations we should contact?



# Appendix B Community Survey

## Community Survey Questions

### Help Us Re-Envision Puyallup Avenue!

The City of Tacoma is developing alternatives for the future of Puyallup Avenue from **Portland Avenue to South C Street**. What does this mean? A better experience for everyone who uses Puyallup Avenue! But first, we need to get opinions from YOU, the community and people who walk, bike, take transit, and drive on Puyallup Avenue.

### How do you use Puyallup Avenue?

*Online respondents are redirected to Survey Monkey after finishing the Wikimapping exercise.*

*Intercept respondents have multiple choice questions on the back of the printed survey.*

*Pop-Up respondents have multiple choice questions on the back of the printed survey.*

1. How often do you visit or spend time on Puyallup Avenue?
  - a. Daily
  - b. A few times per week
  - c. A few times per month
  - d. Rarely
  - e. This is my first time on the corridor
  - f. I've never been on Puyallup Ave
2. What times of the day are you usually on Puyallup Avenue?
  - a. All day or throughout the day
  - b. Typical commuting times (early morning and evening)
  - c. Nighttime
  - d. All different times depending on my trip purpose
3. How do you typically travel TO Puyallup Ave?
  - a. Walk
  - b. Drive
  - c. Bicycle
  - d. Take transit
  - e. Other
4. Once you're on Puyallup Ave, how do you get around?
  - a. Walk
  - b. Drive

**PUYALLUP AVENUE CORRIDOR CONCEPTUAL PLAN | COMMUNITY INPUT**  
City of Tacoma

- c. Bicycle
  - d. Take Transit
  - e. Other
5. What typically brings you to Puyallup Avenue / why are you here today?
- a. Commuting to/from Tacoma Dome Station
  - b. I work on Puyallup Avenue
  - c. Shopping / Errands
  - d. School
    - i. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Tacoma Dome event
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. In terms of transportation, what are the TOP THREE things that would make Puyallup Ave more attractive to you?

| Form of Transportation | Modification to Puyallup Avenue                            | Top Priority<br>(Choose THREE) |
|------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Walking                | More safe places to cross the street                       |                                |
|                        | Wider sidewalks  |                                |
|                        | Sidewalks in better condition                              |                                |
|                        | Curb ramps   |                                |
| Bicycling              | Safe and comfortable bike lanes on Puyallup Ave            |                                |
|                        | Bicycle path on or parallel to Puyallup Ave                |                                |
|                        | Safe and secure bike parking                               |                                |
| Transit                | Safer access to transit stops                              |                                |
| Freight                | Faster and better connections to highways for freight      |                                |
| Driving & Parking      | More on-street parking                                     |                                |
|                        | More off-street parking such as parking lots and garages   |                                |
|                        | More vehicle capacity, such as vehicle lanes or turn lanes |                                |
|                        | More or improved traffic signals                           |                                |
| Placemaking            | Places to sit (parks, benches)                             |                                |
|                        | Better signage and wayfinding to area destinations         |                                |
|                        | Quieter street with slower vehicle speeds                  |                                |
|                        | Trees and landscaping                                      |                                |

**PUYALLUP AVENUE CORRIDOR CONCEPTUAL PLAN | COMMUNITY INPUT**  
City of Tacoma

|                         |     |  |
|-------------------------|-----|--|
|                         | Art |  |
| Other – Please Describe |     |  |

7. What is your home ZIP code? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your input! Would you like to sign up for e-mail updates to continue learning more about this project? We will be hosting public events in November and December.

Sign me up! \_\_\_\_\_

## Interactive Map

### How's it Moving on Puyallup Avenue?

What's your favorite place on Puyallup Avenue? Your least favorite? Where do you feel unsafe? Zoom in to the map and mark down a BARRIER or an IDEA.

1. When you think about walking, bicycling, taking transit, driving, or parking along Puyallup Avenue, what IDEAS do you have for improving the corridor?
2. What is your least favorite thing about the corridor? What BARRIERS do you experience?