



950 Pacific Ave, Suite 300 | Tacoma, WA 98402

October 19, 2021

City of Tacoma  
Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability  
Center for Urban Waters  
326 E D St, Tacoma, WA 98465  
*Submitted electronically to sustainability@cityoftacoma.org*

RE: Climate Action Plan

To Kristin Lynett and the Climate Action Planning team,

On behalf of the Downtown On the Go's Board of Directors and staff, I am writing to give our support for the draft Tacoma Community Climate Action Plan and offer suggestions to strengthen the high impact actions regarding transportation and land use.

Downtown On the Go (DOTG) is the transportation advocate and resource for anyone whose life is in downtown Tacoma. We work across sectors to make Tacoma a better place to walk, bike, and take transit.

DOTG envisions a vibrant, people-focused, and integrated downtown for Tacoma. The draft Climate Action Plan's focus on frequent, reliable, low carbon transit; safe and connected biking, walking, and rolling routes; and transit-oriented development for complete neighborhoods will make Tacoma a safer, healthier, more accessible place to live.

Tacoma's largely single-occupancy vehicle transportation system is responsible for 40% of our community's climate change causing greenhouse gas emissions. The City of Tacoma must both lead by example with bold climate investments through 2024 as well as leverage and support outside partnerships to transform our transportation system.

According to a recent [United Nations report](#), 2021 is a "make-or-break year" to make bold climate action investments to avoid [irreversible, catastrophic climate change](#). Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic recession, recent wildfire smoke, and extreme heat events compound our community's need for immediate climate resilience investments. With this in mind, we are looking for a Climate Action Plan that is urgent and measurable so our community can hold the City accountable for climate action progress. This means fully funding upgrades to City street design standards, prioritizing accessible & connected sidewalks and bike lanes, and resources

for community education, outreach, and leadership as well as specific metrics for tracking action implementation.

**Downtown On the Go is particularly excited about the following included actions:**

- 11: Increase partnerships and funding for active transportation and public transit programs and events that reduce barriers to using these modes and encourage their use.
- 12: Update street design guidelines and processes to make walking, biking, rolling, and riding transit easy and safe.
- 17: Incentivize green buildings, land use density, and mixed-use development with affordable housing near transit.
- 19: Support Pierce Transit in developing a zero emission public transit plan.
- 20: Incentivize active transportation, transit, car sharing, and electric vehicles, and reduce parking minimums in new developments.

**Additional Recommendations:**

**Street Design**

We are pleased to see staff recommend Action 9, *Build a complete, citywide network of sidewalks, safe and ADA-accessible intersections, bike connections and Safe Routes to School improvements by 2050*, emphasized as a “jump-start” action. However, we would also like **Action 12, Update City policies and practices to design and implement streets that are safe, equitable, and accessible. Update the Design Manual to reflect best practices in active transportation & transit design and safety for all road users. Strengthen internal policies to require Complete Streets implementation on all projects that impact the street, including repaving, chipsealing, and re-striping projects;** to be considered a “jump-start” action that can **set a precedent for all future street improvement projects** and ensure consistent best practices. Updating street design guidelines is also an opportunity to improve requirements for bike parking and accessibility in neighborhoods and business districts.

**Transit Oriented Development**

Funding programs that reduce barriers to active transportation and transit (Action 11) should go hand in hand with affordable housing development near transit (Action 17). We would like to see support for **transportation planning in commercial and multi-family building upgrades and development**. For example, working with landlords of affordable housing buildings along transit lines to provide ORCA cards to low income tenants or developing transportation plans for commercial buildings.

**Transportation Incentives**

Action 20, *incentivize active transportation, transit, car sharing, and electric vehicles, and reduce parking minimums in new developments*, is another action that is potentially low-cost to

implement and can have an **immediate impact on transportation access for our community**. While expanding our sidewalk network is very important for safety and active transportation use, providing incentives to reduce single occupancy vehicles on the road will directly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and make electric vehicles and electric bikes more affordable.

### **Staff Capacity**

None of these urgent actions will be successfully implemented if the City is not investing in staff and budgeting capacity to coordinate transit partnerships, plan transportation programs, and conduct community outreach. To date, active transportation projects, street improvements, and transit partnerships have been significantly hindered by budget cuts and a lack of staff. We would like to see an emphasis on increasing staff capacity for transportation projects and collaborations (**Action 10**).

### **Accountability**

We appreciate the 2030 drafted indicator targets outlined in [Appendix 3](#) specifying goals for number of new staff, ADA curbs, EV charging stations, and miles of sidewalk and bike lanes. We look forward to seeing a metric from complete neighbors in the final draft. Additionally, we would like to see the City partner with community organizations and Pierce Transit to track increases in transit ridership, bike-lane users, and sidewalk users as measures of success in active transportation and transit outreach.

Sincerely,

*Tracy Oster*

Tracy Oster,  
Executive Director