



MINUTES

(Approved on 12-04-2019)

TIME: Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building, 1st Floor
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

PRESENT: Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Ryan Givens, David Horne, Christopher Karnes, Brett Santhuff, Andrew Strobel, Alyssa Torrez

ABSENT: N/A

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda for the meeting was approved; and the minutes for the November 6, 2019 meeting was approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE) Update

Curvie Hawkins, Sound Transit, began by providing a recap of the TDLE project and its timeline. This meeting would focus on the station designs and locations for alternatives that Sound Transit was considering. Mr. Hawkins presented a map of the alternatives in the Tacoma Dome and Portland Avenue area, noting that these were only two of the four stations in the entire TDLE project and that the other two stations were in Fife and South Federal Way. He also reviewed the design guiding principles, which consisted of development capacity, comfortable urban environment, and great multi-modal transit hub.

Tim Bates, Sound Transit, provided an overview of visualization for the alternatives, noting that these were simply initial ideas, which would translate to limited information and missing details that would need to be addressed. He proceeded to introduce the Close-to-Sounder alternative, which would be an elevated station replacing a portion of Freight House Square. Sound Transit was also exploring the possibility of a street frontage for parts of the station that could be used for non-transit uses. The engineers also studied the location of the tail tracks above the west end; they were uncertain if the tail tracks would end at D Street leading to the concern of where the supporting columns of the tail ends would land. In terms of serving as a multi-modal transit hub, the Close-to-Sounder alternative would have a direct connection to the Amtrak station while still being close enough to the bus station.

Regarding the 25th West station, this alternative was preferred because it would be close to all transit modes without infringing many changes to the current infrastructures. It would be an elevated station with a mezzanine level over open street. An option under study by Sound Transit was to relocate the bus facility,

which would potentially reduce transfer distance between modes and improve visual connection, but might cause greater impact and affect future development.

The third alternative was the 25th East station, also elevated with a mezzanine level over open street. This alternative shifted the station to be on the east side of G Street. While the general concept was similar to the 25th West alternative, this station would additionally offer entrance on both north and south sides along with a crossover track for the train to switch direction. Regarding the multi-modal transit hub principle, a pedestrian bridge connected to the existing parking garage was also being discussed; however, there might not be enough space for such bridge.

The last alternative for the Tacoma Dome area is the 26th station, designed to straddle D Street. It would have both entrance on the north side leading to the Freight House Square and south side leading to the Tacoma Dome. In regards to future extension, this option would be too high to go under Highway 705. It would also be too close to the proposed Mount Bay apartment complex and furthest away from all transit modes compared to other options.

Moving on to the Portland Avenue station, there was one primary location on the south side of 26th Street. In terms of design, this station would be a side-platform station due to its proximity to the Puyallup River. Sound Transit were also looking into pedestrian bridges for this station.

Commissioner Santhuff commented that it would have been useful for the Planning Commission to receive and, in turn, study the designs ahead of time. He raised a concern that a below grade and other cut-and-cover options were not provided to the Planning Commission, which possibly might have affected the feedback and direction from the Commission.

Commissioner Edmonds shared Commissioner Santhuff's disappointment that the cut-and-cover alternatives were not included for the Commission's consideration. She went on to inquire about the proposed buildings noted in the designs; they were projects in the development community, some of which had been permitted whereas others were merely at the proposal stage. Commissioner Edmonds also asked for clarification of "non-transit uses," to which Mr. Bates indicated that they would be uses such as coffee stand or a flower shop, and that Sound Transit were still working on defining the types of uses. Furthermore, residents from Northeast Tacoma area would likely use the South Federal Way station, and perhaps would appreciate similarity in designs and functions of the stations. Commissioner Edmonds also asked about outreach and community feedback for the project.

Commissioner Karnes appreciated the consideration for passenger safety (i.e. pedestrian bridges) in the Portland Avenue station design. In reference to the 26th East alternative being considerably further away from the bus station, he questioned if there would be an option to relocate the bus facility like for 25th West alternative. Mr. Bates stated that it was a possibility, but also pending on other elements. Commissioner Karnes also asked about the criteria that would necessitate a mezzanine in a light rail station, which involved two components – to comply with height threshold and to provide a level for passenger circulation in cases of center-platform stations over open street.

Commissioner Horne inquired about the goal of the project in general, adding that small details could be worked out once the main objective was identified. He believed the convenience and ridership were essential. It would not be preferable to focus on mitigating impact and end up with an under-utilized station.

Commissioner Strobel was interested in seeing the height of the station for the 26th alternative and asked about businesses that would be impacted by the 25th West alternative. He wanted a better understanding to be prepared for questions about impacted businesses. Mr. Hawkins stated that Sound Transit would provide follow-up information and that they had been communicating with the property owners.

Commissioner Givens was concerned about eliminating the Freight House Square, a unique place with small businesses that may not be able to re-open with higher rent rate. He also commented that all the station designs, except for the 25th East alternative, seemed cramped and awkwardly located.

Chair Petersen stated that the Commission were more concerned with the impact of the development on the community and its alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. She wanted staff to ensure that the Commission be made aware of any conflicts regarding the Comprehensive Plan and zoning codes.

Commissioner Santhuff requested Sound Transit to start developing designs at eye-level view. Referencing the 26th alternative, he also wanted the engineers to explore other options for the track-switching and tail-track structures.

Ian Munce, Planning Division Services, reported to the Commission that the Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Committee (TODAC) had been formed, with three Planning Commissioners. While Sound Transit broadly conducts community outreach with its constituents, the TODAC is to bring forward recommendations specific to the City of Tacoma and the Comprehensive Plan.

The meeting was recessed at 6:20 p.m. and resumed at 6:28 p.m.

2. Pierce Transit Destination 2040 Long Range Plan Update

Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit, provided the reason for the Long Range Plan (LRP) Update and an overview of its objectives. He explained in details the differences in comparison to the Destination 2040 finalized and adopted in April 2016. Mr. Stavish also directed the Commission to the new online mapping and comments tool, as well as ways to provide feedback on the LRP Update.

Commissioner Edmonds was pleased with the recently added services in the Northeast Tacoma area. Commissioner Givens suggested Pierce Transit look into the Mixed Use Centers in the Comprehensive Plan and strengthen services in those corridors. He also commented on the need for more facility maintenance. On the note of safe and welcoming facility, Commissioner Horne recommended more light at each bus stop. Vice-Chair McInnis added that he would like to see increased trip frequency. Commissioner Strobel would like to incorporate the City's Comprehensive Plan with Pierce Transit's LRP, for instance taking into consideration of the 15-minute neighborhood while assessing potential bus stop locations. Chair Petersen suggested looking into younger demographics of riders. Commissioner Karnes asked whether the LRP would offer suggestions to other jurisdictions on what could be done to support the LRP goals in terms of changes to land use and right-of-way.

Ian Munce informed the Commission that he would be at the meeting on December 18 to discuss VISION 2050. In particular to Commissioner Karnes' comment, the plan would cover how to tie land use and transportation together.

E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING

- 1) Human Rights Commission and Planning Commission Joint Session on Housing Justice Policy
- 2) 2020 Amendment – Transportation Master Plan Amendments
- 3) Residential Infill Pilot Program 2.0

F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Division Services, provided a brief update on the Tideflats Subarea Plan process. He reported to the Commission that the City Council had approved the Tideflats Interim Regulations extension. On November 7, the Steering Committee met and finalized the Advisory Group, which would be updated on the City's webpage. The next step was to hire consultants, expected to complete early next year. Mr. Atkinson would periodically come back to provide updates for the Commission.

Brian Boudet, Manager of Planning Division Services, indicated that Councilmember Beale, at the end of the Tideflats Interim Regulation renewal process, had requested to see more definitive tracking of fossil fuel for better consideration at the next renewal.

The next Planning Commission meeting would have members from the Human Rights Commission in attendance. It would not be a joint meeting.

The City Council were having a lot of discussion on homelessness issues. The Council was considering some clarifications to the Temporary Encampment Ordinance.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

**These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:*

http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/