



MINUTES (Approved on 11-16-16)

TIME: Wednesday, November 2, 2016, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen,
Scott Winship, Jeremy Woolley
ABSENT: Jeff McInnis, Brett Santhuff, Dorian Waller

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF OCTOBER 5, 2016

The agenda was approved. The minutes of the regular meeting on October 5, 2016 were reviewed. Commissioner Neal noted that she had made a suggestion that the City provide a one page report reflecting what the Commission does. The minutes were approved as amended. It was later noted by staff that the suggestion from Commissioner Neal had actually been made at the October 19th meeting. The Commission acknowledged that the minutes of October 5th meeting were approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public came forward to provide comments.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Pierce Transit Update

Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit Principal Planner, provided a briefing on the recently adopted long-range transit plan, *Destination 2040*. He reported that they had internally developed three hypothetical fixed route transit network scenarios for incremental growth, and another for a potential worst case reduction in services. Mr. Stavish reviewed that their growth scenarios ranged from 2% incremental to 3% aspirational annual growth which would take them from 450,000 annual service hours to 900,000 service hours by 2040. He reported that they took into account a customer survey that had called for greater frequency, a longer service span, and improved night and weekend service. They would also connect directly to Sound Transit once the Tacoma Link light rail and Central Link extension locations were determined.

Mr. Stavish discussed growth scenario 2 which would put them at 725,000 annual service hours by 2040. He noted that scenario 2 would leave the route structure mostly unmodified, while restoring evening and weekend service. Some of the guidelines they followed when creating the growth scenarios included that density is a strong predictor of ridership, the route network should facilitate access to as much of the Public Transportation Benefit Area as practical, and routes should be anchored by major destinations at both ends. He noted that in this scenario they had added a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service operating between Downtown Tacoma and Spanaway. They were also doing a high capacity transit study and alternatives analysis for the 14 mile corridor. In all scenarios they would make slight route adjustments to accommodate the Tacoma Link extension.

Mr. Stavish discussed the 3% growth scenario, which was based on high growth and transit service hours, expanded or new routes, and unlimited funding availability. The scenario would put them at about 930,000 service hours by 2040. He discussed a backbone network that was created for the South Sound

region that connects the major centers and served as a basis for the high frequency routes of 15 minutes or less that connect to the proposed Central Link extension. Opportunities for growth that were considered in the plan included evaluating transit dependent population areas; coordinated planning for targeted infill areas such as the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea plan; studying the Pacific Avenue/State Route 7 corridor for a new higher capacity BRT service; emerging technologies; and ongoing integration with regional transit providers such as Sound Transit, King County Metro, and Intercity Transit.

Mr. Stavish noted that their most direct planning partners were the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), Metropolitan Planning Organization, Sound Transit, and King County Metro. As other agencies' plans were finalized in 2016-2017 the individual recommendations and measures for growth in transit services would be utilized by the PSRC as they began updating their own plan in 2017.

Commissioners provided the following comments and questions:

- Vice-Chair Wamback asked if the plan would allow for more opportunities like the Ruston trolley. Peter Stackpole, Pierce Transit, responded that the long-range plan does budget for partnerships like the Ruston Trolley and similar services that might not meet their regular service standards.
- Chair Beale asked how Sound Transit's decision to extend the Tacoma Link light rail to Tacoma Community College instead of the Tacoma Mall had affected the long-range transit plan. Mr. Stavish responded that they were so far into the process that they had not altered the plan, but they can move to wherever Sound Transit is.
- Chair Beale asked if the long-range transit plan discussed funding sources. Mr. Stavish responded that it didn't go into funding sources, but did consider costs for each of the scenarios.

The 2016 Route Analysis of Pierce Transit's existing bus service was discussed. Mr. Stackpole reviewed that when they were doing their budget for 2016, they had determined that they could put some 54,000 hours back into their service, which would be the first major service restoration since 2012. He noted that there had been changes in the service area, land use patterns, and customer needs since the last update, so they had hired a consultant to look at their system and had conducted a robust public outreach process. Jason Kennedy, Pierce Transit, reviewed that the consultant had looked at the current population and the future projections to see where the land use is, what the service is now, and what could be improved on in the future. The consultant had concluded that they had a strong dependence on transfers; that there was duplication of service; and that the span of services was inadequate for many of the trip types. The consultant had also interviewed the board and found that their top goal was to attract more discretionary riders and commuters. The top priorities of the public were for more frequent service and earlier/later service on weekdays.

The first alternative proposed was to maintain the existing route network to minimize impacts on existing customers. It would add 35,000 hours to the existing network and improve the weekday peak service. Mr. Kennedy discussed how the frequency of service would increase during peak and midday hours.

The second alternative would invest in frequency and span of service to boost convenience and ridership. It would restructure by simplifying service, reducing duplication, and improving peak and midday frequency on key routes. The 35,000 hours added would restructure the network to give all urban routes 30 minute peak and midday service. Route 402 would have 30 minute midday and peak service as well. All urban routes and routes 3 and 4 would have expanded hours of service through at least 10 p.m. Mr. Kennedy reviewed maps of the proposed system, noting routes that would be eliminated or consolidated.

Mr. Kennedy commented that Alternative 1 would maximize coverage while Alternative 2 would allow the network to operate later and more frequently. He noted that the recommendation of the consultant was for Alternative 2. He reviewed that they were still conducting public outreach and would be presenting feedback to the board on November 14. The board would be voting in December to choose between the alternatives and the service changes would be implemented on March 12, 2017.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Commissioner Neal asked if there would be any other access to the Ruston Way waterfront with the elimination of Route 13. Mr. Kennedy commented that only the seasonal trolley would directly serve the area.

- Vice-Chair Wamback asked if there was any route directly connecting north Tacoma to the Tacoma Mall. It was noted that there was no direct route and that the only way to reach the mall from north Tacoma would be to transfer Downtown.
- Chair Beale asked how much consideration they gave areas with higher levels of poverty or higher levels of racial diversity that could be served by transit including routes on the east side of the City. Mr. Stackpole responded that with the proposed changes to the east side they do a much better job of frequency and span of service. He added that anytime a route is eliminated, expanded, or has a change to more than 20% of its service hours they look at a half mile tract around the route to make sure they aren't adversely affecting those populations.
- Chair Beale asked if they had thought about increasing the frequency beyond 15 minutes on Route 1. Mr. Stackpole responded that with a ten minute frequency there would be bus bunching particularly on the 6th Avenue portion of the route.
- Commissioner Petersen asked how much they consider non commuter ridership like people running errands and students. Mr. Stackpole commented that they would be increasing midday frequency and expanding hours until 10pm.
- Commissioner Neal asked if they looked at the spacing between routes for walkability. Mr. Kennedy responded that they had compared the impacts on walkability with the two alternatives, but with restructuring the network there would be some increases in walk distance.
- Commissioner Woolley asked if there was a chance of bringing back eliminated lines in the future with the 3% growth scenario. Mr. Stackpole responded that there was a larger philosophy guiding their system, which had originally been focused on timed transfers. He added that the ideal would be a service operating at a 10 minute frequency with on street transfers utilizing a grid system.

2. Institutional Campus Zoning Review

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, discussed the scope of work for the proposed changes to the zoning designation, development standards, and administrative procedures for major campus institutions. He reviewed that when they adopted the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan in 2015 they had made a change to the land use designations to better represent some of the large institutional campuses and to address the disconnect between the intensities on the land use designation map and the intent. Mr. Atkinson reviewed that, through the Comprehensive Plan update, they had focused on the idea of campuses as locations with multiple buildings, larger sites, and a citywide or regional appeal. Policies in the Comprehensive Plan related to the institutional campus designation recognized that they provide important services, areas for community activity, workforce development resources, and large densities of employment; recognized that these are large uses with a large potential impact; and encouraged the development of long-range plans for major institutions.

The five paths to permitting for institutions were discussed with case studies. Mr. Atkinson reported that the first path was permitting outright with minimal notification. Tacoma Community College (TCC) was noted as an example within a mixed-use center that had been permitted outright through zoning. For the community this had resulted in little notification beyond SEPA notices. TCC had been subject to some building design standards because of its location in a mixed-use area, but there were no special use or design criteria.

The second path was through conditional use, with the Cheney Stadium area noted as a case study. Mr. Atkinson reviewed that in the Cheney area most large developments were approved through conditional use, which created challenges for getting offsite signs for the stadium. He commented that the basic issue was that the development standards were designed for the typical residential lots in the R-2 area. Another issue was that with a conditional use they were required to demonstrate a need for the use, which created issues with existing uses. The benefits of the conditional use option were enhanced public notification and flexibility on height.

The third path was through the conditional use master plan with the University of Puget Sound (UPS) noted as a case study. Mr. Atkinson reviewed that any use that is listed as a conditional use can use the conditional use master plan. He noted that the benefits included a longer timeframe for development and flexibility with development standards. With UPS this had resulted in a height increase at the core of the campus and limitations on the heights around the periphery.

The fourth path discussed was the hospital medical base zone (HMX) with St. Joseph Medical Center noted as an example. The base zoning defined the edge of the facility area and reduces the notification requirements, but also placed restrictions on uses not associated with hospitals to ensure land supply.

The fifth path was through a development regulation agreement, which is a legislative action that creates site specific zoning and use standards. Point Defiance was noted as the case study where it had been done as part of the Point Defiance Master Plan. The benefits included a longer time frame, enhanced notification, some additional criteria in the code, development standard flexibility, and predictability.

Commissioners provided the following questions and comments:

- Vice-Chair Wamback suggested that more consistency was needed in how they deal with the edge of institutional campuses particularly in the HMX districts. He commented that with the proposals for the Allenmore campus, St. Joe's, and the Tacoma General/Group Health complex, there did not seem to be enough consideration for what was happening at the edge of those areas. He commented that a 1000 foot notification could help.
- Vice-Chair Wamback reported that a member of the community had expressed concern that the proposed changes were a shortcut to rezone the Port of Tacoma area. Mr. Boudet responded that the proposed changes did not have anything to do with rezoning of the port area as it wasn't an institutional campus.
- Vice-Chair Wamback commented that the properties on S. 35th St. and Pacific Ave. probably should not be zoned HMX any longer.
- Commissioner Neal reported that she had heard concerns from many citizens that they do not get enough notification and that people are not finding out about things until it is too late. She commented that she would like to see a 1000 foot notification radius and an extension of the comment period to 30 days. She suggested that they should also consider other ways to reach people such as a planning department Facebook page.
- Chair Beale noted that the conditional use permit master plan option provides use flexibility for larger sites while allowing for a land use permit that has some input. He commented that he was less concerned about the notification radius and more concerned about who actually approves the permit and that there is a public hearing involved.
- Commissioner Petersen commented that with Cheney Stadium and TCC, expanding the notification radius would not capture everyone in the community who might be interested in what is going on. Mr. Atkinson responded that the notification could play a role, but that publicly owned facilities like Cheney might deserve a more in depth public discussion.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Wung updated the Commission on the following items:

- The City Council would be moving the public comment segment of their November 8th meeting to next meeting on November 15th.
- Commissioner Neal's correction to the minutes of October 5 concerned a conversation from the meeting of October 19 and the comment noted would be included in those minutes.

Mr. Boudet updated the Commission on the following items:

- The City Council had held a public hearing on the 2017-2018 Biennial Budget on November 1, with no significant changes. The first reading of the budget was scheduled for November 15.
- At the last meeting of the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee, they had discussed Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and the LCLIP program. Forterra had provided a presentation on what LCLIP is and there had been interest in looking at TDR bonus incentives.
- The third presentation of the *Conversations RE: Tacoma* lecture series would be on November 10.

F. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:44 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.