



TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
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COPY: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee
Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Environmental Services Director/Executive Liaison
PRESENTER: Mark D’Andrea, P.E., Project Manager, Public Works
SUBJECT: Puyallup Avenue Transit/Complete Street Improvement – Project Update
DATE: April 14, 2021

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Public Works (PW) staff will provide a brief summary on the work to date, including outcomes of the conceptual design phase and public outreach, ongoing stakeholder communication, and Public Works’ recommendation regarding grant acceptance and project funding. This presentation is for informational purposes prior to the City formally accepting the \$2.1 million design grant in June 2021.

BACKGROUND:

The City completed a conceptual design of Puyallup Avenue from South “C” Street to Portland Avenue in February 2018. This phase of work included extensive community outreach, including design charrettes, stakeholder meetings, in-person and online surveys, and an open house. The outcome of this effort was presented to the Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group (BPTAG), the Transportation Commission (TC), and the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee (IPS) in late 2017. Following these presentations, the TC provided a letter to PW that identified overall project/design recommendations for consideration.

In October 2018, the City was awarded a \$2.1 million federal grant to complete the project’s design. In September 2020, in preparation for grant acceptance, PW began engaging with the Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (TODAG) to review the work to date and better understand their concerns regarding on-street parking and the inclusion of an eastbound HOV/transit lane. Coordination with BPTAG and the TC followed. BPTAG issued a letter of support in January 2021 that focused on the Transportation Master Plan’s Green Transportation Hierarchy. In February 2021, TODAG sent a letter to the TC recommending the City accept the grant, while also suggesting design principles for the TC to review and for PW to consider during the design process. The TC reviewed TODAG’s recommendations, provided comment, and issued a letter in support of grant acceptance in March 2021. PW staff will continue to work with the BPTAG, TODAG, and the TC to understand their concerns and recommended project and design goals.

ISSUE:

The project’s construction phase is estimated to cost approximately \$18M. Should the City accept the \$2.1M federal design grant, the City will have ten years (to ~2031) to obtain the estimated \$18M needed for the project’s construction. Design grant acceptance is required by June 1, 2021.

ALTERNATIVES:



Return the Grant: Return the grant and pursue future funding for the design and construction of smaller sections of Puyallup Avenue. However, please consider the following:

- a. Returning grant funds can sometimes reflect negatively on the local agency and their future grant requests.
- b. In 2018, Puyallup Avenue scored just high enough to be awarded the \$2.1M in design funding, breaking the project up into smaller sections may or may not help to obtain future funding.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City accepts the \$2.1M design grant and prioritizes the reconstruction of Puyallup Avenue for future construction funding opportunities to avoid the repayment of the \$2.1M. If the City does not obtain \$18M in construction funding by 2031, budget sources will need to be identified to repay the \$2.1M in design funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

The award of \$2.1M in design funds offers a unique opportunity to reconstruct a significant corridor in the south downtown, a major link to the Port of Tacoma and the City of Fife, and a connector to Pacific Avenue, I-5 and SR 509. It also provides a chance to apply complete street principals to a corridor that supports one of the largest Transit-Oriented Development districts in the state, and that serves as the gateway to Tacoma for thousands of first-time Tacoma Dome patrons. As it is unlikely an opportunity like this will be available again in the near future, the PW Department will obligate the \$2.1M in federal funds in June and begin the design process.

Attachments

- 1/14/21 – BPTAG Letter
- 2/22/21 – TODAG Letter
- 3/11/21 – TC Letter