



City of Tacoma
Sustainable Tacoma Commission

September 17, 2022

TO: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee

RE: BRT Stream System Expansion Study

Dear IPS Committee Chair Walker and Committee members,

The Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC) is a community advisory group whose purpose is to advise City Council and staff on sustainability initiatives, bringing community accountability to implementation of the City's vision for sustainability¹, 2022 Environmental Action Plan², and other sustainability policies. On August 18th, Pierce Transit's Bus Rapid Transit team presented to the STC regarding BRT and the Stream System Expansion Study (SSES). We are writing today to express our support of expanded BRT service in Pierce County.

Transportation, as a category, is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Puget Sound Region³. The high frequency and streamlined experience of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) makes transit use appealing and convenient, contributing to mode shift away from personal vehicles. STC is appreciative of Pierce Transit's commitment to purchasing all electric BRT coaches and planning for the future with flexibility in mind to prioritize the newest in sustainable bus technology. The BRT Stream system has the potential to have a significant positive impact on air quality and congestion mitigation in Tacoma and Pierce County.

More BRT routes in Tacoma will provide tremendous benefit to our transportation network, particularly for non-drivers. It is known that low income and communities of color are more likely to depend on public transit and active transportation for their mobility⁴ while also facing disproportionate impacts from traffic violence⁵ due in part to insufficient infrastructure in their neighborhoods. BRT brings infrastructure improvements which prioritize safe mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists, and creates opportunities for the installation of street trees, small

¹https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/environmentalservices/office_of_environmental_policy_and_sustainability

²<https://cityoftacoma.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=193914>

³<https://pscleanair.gov/632/Climate-Change-and-Transportation#:~:text=Transportation%20is%20the%20largest%20source,below%201990%20levels%20by%202050.>

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/07/who-relies-on-public-transit-in-the-u-s/>

⁵<https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/An%20Analysis%20of%20Traffic%20Fatalities%20by%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity.pdf>

green spaces, upgrades to roadway stormwater systems, and other sustainable enhancements. More BRT in Tacoma has the potential to significantly reduce inequalities in access.

STC is prepared to advocate to Tacoma City Council and City of Tacoma staff on the importance of meaningful collaboration with Pierce Transit on BRT routes in Tacoma, as a means of meeting Climate Action Plan goals and increasing overall equity in access to opportunities in Tacoma.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Evlondo Cooper III

Evlondo Cooper III, Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lexi Brewer', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lexi Brewer, Co-Chair

CC: City of Tacoma Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability
City Manager Elizabeth Pauli
Interim Deputy City Manager Kurtis Kingsolver
Environmental Services Director Michael Slevin
Planning Commission liaison Lihuang Wung
Transportation Commission liaison Carrie Wilhelme
Pierce Transit Board