



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Kim Bedier, Acting Director, Community and Economic Development Department
COPY: Economic Development Committee
SUBJECT: Waterfront Update – Metro Parks Tacoma and Downtown to Defiance Trolley 2018
DATE: February 27, 2018

SUMMARY:

Tacoma's Ruston Way waterfront and Point Defiance Park will be busy this summer with events, capital projects and a continuation of the pilot of the Downtown to Defiance Trolley.

Phedra Redifer, Regional Parks Attractions Manager for Metro Parks Tacoma, will update the Committee on Point Defiance Park and Waterfront Phase I construction projects.

Tina Lee, Community Development Administrator for Pierce Transit, will provide an overview of plans for an expanded 2018 pilot for the Downtown to Defiance Trolley that premiered in 2017.

BACKGROUND:

Tacoma's Ruston Way waterfront, which stretches from downtown, along Schuster Parkway-Ruston Way to Point Defiance Park, is one of the crown jewels of the City. The waterfront's expansive reach with unique features and amenities enhances the quality of life for local residents, attracts new and repeat visitors and generates economic activity all while projecting Tacoma's image to national and international audiences. This summer the City, Pierce Transit, Metro Parks Tacoma, Travel Tacoma and other partners will continue leveraging the resources of the waterfront to improve, enhance and expand access, commerce and recreational options for all.

Point Defiance Park is undergoing several ambitious upgrades and enhancements as a result of a voter-approved 2014 capital improvement bond. Within the year, Metro Parks will be opening a new aquarium, an elevated pedestrian walkway linking Ruston Way to Point Defiance Park, an 11-acre waterfront park and constructing a new roundabout at the park's Pearl Street entrance.

Pierce Transit staff will seek Board of Commissioner approval to operate the 2018 Downtown to Defiance Trolley season at their March 12, 2018 meeting. Staff is recommending the trolley operate Friday, Saturday and Sundays from June 1 through September 2, 2018. Pierce Transit and its partners are modifying the Downtown to Defiance Trolley project to attract additional ridership and economic benefits in the summer of 2018. The trolley route will be extended along Pacific Avenue to the Tacoma Dome Station to provide access to more destinations including the many museums in Tacoma. Pierce Transit will be working with the trolley stakeholders, hotels and museum marketing teams to promote the 2018 service.



ISSUE:

Tacoma 2025, the City of Tacoma Strategic Plan, calls out the following Community Priorities:

- 3d) Strengthen downtown Tacoma as a business core and residential option. A successful downtown Tacoma is a driver of Tacoma's economic health and quality of life;
- 5c) Leverage and strengthen Tacoma's arts and cultural assets. Tacoma's excellent collection of arts and cultural facilities and buildings provides an economic advantage in attracting residents and investment;
- 6a) Increase transportation options. Tacomans need to be mobile, with transportation choices including transit, bicycling and walking;
- 6b) Sustain and improve Tacoma's natural environment. Tacoma residents treasure their outstanding parks and stunning natural setting; these must be sustained.

The activities presented in this briefing, individually and collectively, leverage the natural and developed assets of the waterfront to strengthen downtown and increase transportation options by improving access to and from the waterfront, leverage Tacoma's cultural assets by highlighting the community's seafaring traditions, and improve Tacoma's natural environment through investments at Point Defiance Park.

ALTERNATIVES:

No alternatives are presented. This is an informational briefing only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact. This is an informational briefing only.

RECOMMENDATION:

There is no recommendation. This is an informational briefing only.