



**City of Tacoma**  
Public Works Department

Date: February 21, 2018

To: Brian Boudet, Manager  
PDS Long Range Planning

Elliott Barnett, Planner  
Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan Manager

From: Dana Brown, Assistant Division Manager  
PW Engineering, Transportation/Traffic

RE: Response to Traffic Analysis procedures for Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan

Dear Brian and Elliott,

This memorandum is in response to our recent meeting regarding the traffic analysis approach and proposed capital projects for the draft Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan (TMNSAP). It is our understanding that the IPS Council Committee, in response to concerns by specific property owners in the subarea, has requested more information on the proposed connecting corridors and the rationale for their location and type of use.

Briefly, as the following is described in the draft plan, the transportation study for the TMNSAP was carried out using a "System-Wide" analysis. This standard approach is consistent with the policy direction in the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) of analyzing the subarea transportation network as a multimodal transportation system (complete streets) and for defining satisfactory performance of the system to meet concurrency based on the expectations of system completeness and planned future growth.

The proposed future multi-modal transportation network for the subarea is consistent with City's goals and objectives to transition from an auto-oriented environment to a more pedestrian friendly mixed-use community. Multiple policies in the Transportation Master Plan support these goals, including Policy 3.6, Street System Design, which states that street system design should facilitate "...transit and active transportation connections by encouraging...a rectangular grid pattern with smaller block sizes..."

Tacoma's adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the TMP provide the foundation for the land use/zoning, future trips, mode choice options, and future capacity to serve the subarea. The system-wide traffic study is the basis for the area-wide SEPA approval which is a key element for future investments in the Tacoma Mall subarea; a Regional Growth Center. The proposed capital projects identified in TMNSAP will be incorporated into the TMP. The future implementation of these projects along with the planned modal shift will be necessary to ensure compliance with the SEPA analysis.

While a system-wide approach provides the required assessment of the arterial system for SEPA, it does NOT evaluate the need for non-arterial or Tier 2 connecting corridors. Therefore, the proposed non-arterial corridors were not specifically or individually modeled. However, to accommodate the planned growth in the subarea, the traffic model assumptions include a modal shift plus the proposed Tier 1 and 2 capacity/efficiency projects. If these assumptions are unrealized then the expectation is more arterial capacity will be needed in the future. Therefore, the PW Traffic Section supports the concept of urban form designs that are expected to increase access/mobility and to reduce single occupant vehicle travel.

We also understand that the Planning Commission recommendation establishes the development of new streets, pedestrian and bicycle connections as a policy goal, as described above. Furthermore, the Subarea Plan package establishes a Site Approval process for City review of the transportation impacts of large-scale development in large block areas within the subarea. The Site Approval process, if adopted, would require the applicant to submit a Transportation Impact Assessment of the project-specific impacts of the proposed development. Project proponents would only be required to take steps to create new connections if warranted by those project-specific impacts.

We further support an approach that ensures City requirements have a clear nexus, be proportional with the impacts of the proposed development, and that the envisioned transportation system is constructed concurrent with development. If the planned growth is realized and the planned transition to multimodal transportation is unrealized then the TMNSAP would no longer be in compliance with the SEPA planned action or the City's adopted concurrency standards.

Recent success by the City in obtaining grant funding for transportation investments would indicate that funding could be available to support the planned projects but the adoption of this plan commits the City to completing future improvements concurrent with development—whether or not grant funds are secured. The need for funding partnerships (public/private) is an important component of this plan.

It is suggested that you forward this memo to the members of the IPS Committee and TMNSAP key stakeholders in advance of the February 28<sup>th</sup> IPS meeting. I will attend the meeting to answer questions.