



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Anita Gallagher, City Manager's Office; Kurtis Kingsolver, Public Works Director
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee; Mike Slevin, Environmental Services Director
PRESENTER: Anita Gallagher, City Manager's Office; Josh Diekmann, Public Works
SUBJECT: Advocacy on Transportation Funding Requests
DATE: February 24, 2021

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

This presentation will provide a review of the City's transportation project funding priorities for 2021 with regard to advocacy at the state and federal levels. An update on the legislative process will also be discussed.

BACKGROUND:

Chair McCarthy requested an informational briefing on how the City is advocating for funding for major transportation projects, including how City Council Members should be involved in that advocacy.

ISSUE:

As a rapidly-growing, mid-sized city, Tacoma has transportation funding needs in order to adequately serve our population and foster a stronger economy. Our project needs help to address such critical issues as freight mobility, multi-modal facilities for active transportation, and traffic congestion. Because some of our transportation projects are of a larger scale, they cannot be fully funded by existing City revenues that help address preservation and maintenance.

The City develops the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan and the Capital Facilities Plan, both adopted by the City Council, that aid in the prioritization of projects and grant seeking. When a project cannot be easily funded through City revenues or regional grant sources, the City proposes to add these projects to the Legislative Agenda for state and federal advocacy to fill funding gaps. The City Council then approves the list of transportation funding requests each year when it adopts the Legislative Agenda.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

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



Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge Replacement

Project Description

This project will provide road, intersection, and interchange improvements of great value to the Port of Tacoma, The Puyallup Tribe, the surrounding industrial area, and the Cities of Fife and Tacoma. The project is a multi-phased plan to replace the 2,400 foot long Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge.

The project will replace the remaining 1,400 feet of the bridge by installing a steel tied truss arch, which fully spans the Puyallup River, and makes the final connection into the City of Fife over the Union Pacific Railroad. It is estimated the cost of the Phase 2 work will cost \$180 million. Work would begin in 2021 and be completed by 2027. The project will remove columns in the water which will improve fish habitat in the Puyallup River.

Design, Right of Way, and Construction funding is being sought for Phase 2.

History

The history of the existing bridge over the Puyallup River is tied to the history of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and their fight to retain their sovereign rights to fish and hunt on their ancestral lands. While history cannot be rewritten, acknowledging the past as a first step towards reconciliation, it creates new opportunities for understanding and creating a partnership. The Tacoma City Council and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians collaborated to rename the Puyallup River Bridge to the Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge and a renaming dedication ceremony was held on August 9, 2019.

Completed Construction

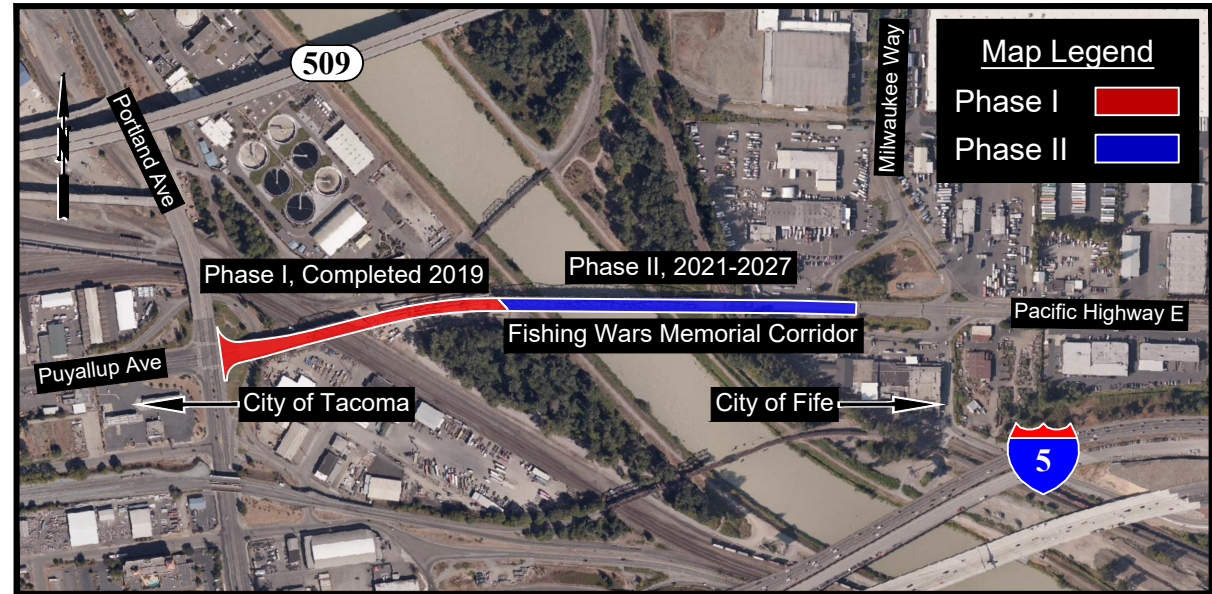
Phase 1 of the bridge replacement was completed in 2019. The project replaced the failing bridge structure over the BNSF Railroad line and initiated an active transportation route on the corridor. The design-build project was completed at a cost of \$42 million.

Project Justification and Benefits

The Port of Tacoma indirectly accounts for more than 43,000 jobs and generates \$637 million in annual wages in Pierce County.

Specific Improvements of this project would include:

- Improvement to the level of service and eliminates the weight restriction for trucks traveling to and from the Port of Tacoma.
- Improvement of the operation of the I-5 mainline and all streets and intersections in the project vicinity.
- Proposed construction of the SR 167 freeway extension will substantially improve access to the east portion of the Port of Tacoma and this project will complement the new freeway extension with improved access to the west portion of the Port.
- Improves safety to the traveling public by widening the lanes to current standards.
- The project will tie into existing multimodal facilities providing connections between the City of Tacoma, City of Fife, and the Port of Tacoma by completing bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the Puyallup River allowing for recreational and commuter users.
- The Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge is exceptionally important to freight mobility, emergency response, and system resiliency for crossing the Puyallup River.
- The Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge is the most direct detour for closures and congestion on I-5 and one of only a few crossing of the Puyallup River serving the Port of Tacoma.



Funding and Schedule

Year of Funding	Year of Completion	Total cost
2021	2027	\$180 Million

Summary of Benefits

- Improves Access to Port of Tacoma
- Improves Safety
- Improves I-5 Mainline Operation

Funding Partners

State

- State Legislative Earmark

Local

- City of Fife
- City of Tacoma
- Port of Tacoma
- Tacoma Public Utilities

Other

- FMSIB (Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board)
- TIB (Transportation Improvement Board)
- PSRC (Puget Sound Regional Council)

Federal

- Build America Grant (Better Utilization Investments to Leverage Development)
- Infra Grants (Investment to Revitalize America's Infrastructure)
- Local Bridge Program Grant



Prairie Line Trail Phase II (S. 21st to S.25th)

Project Description

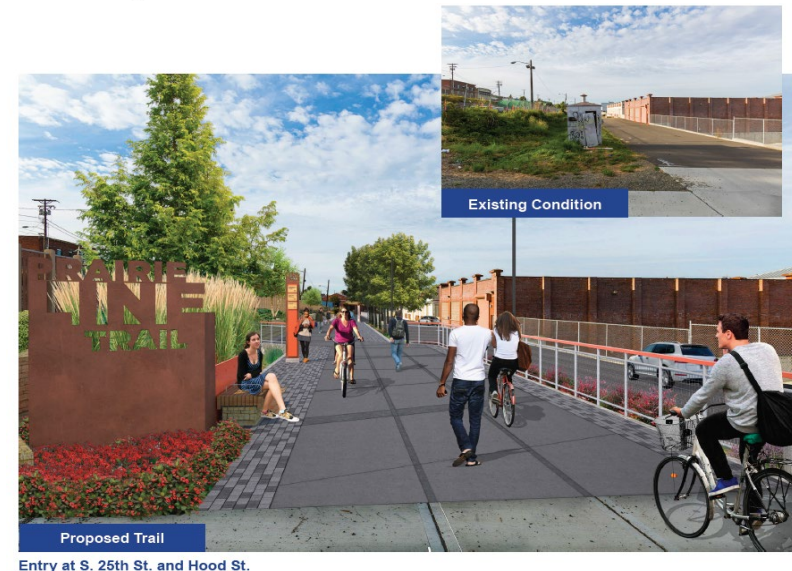
Phase II of the Prairie Line Trail (PLT), will construct a shared use path in Tacoma's Brewery District between South 21 Street and South 25 Street along the former BNSF rail line commonly referred to as Hood Street. The project is being built in collaboration with the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) and will connect the existing section of the PLT on the UWT campus at its northern terminus and connect at its southern terminus to the Water Flume Line Trail. The project is estimated at \$6,500,000 to construct.

Completed Construction

Two parts of the PLT are already completed. One section provides a trail route through the UWT campus and a second section, the City's first phase completed in 2016, runs north of the UWT taking users down to the Thea Foss Waterway.

Project Justification and Benefits

- Completes the missing third of the PLT and fills the missing link between the PLT and the City's trail network.
- Provides a gentle slope of 2% for bikers and walkers connecting downtown to the Thea Foss Waterfront, Schuster Parkway, Ruston Way and Point Defiance.
- A top priority catalyst project in Tacoma's subarea plan. Supporting \$1 billion in new construction in the Brewery District.
- Supports anticipated planned growth in the downtown of 127,000 new residents and 97,000 new jobs by 2040.
- Promotes active transportation in the downtown.





Puyallup Avenue Transit/Complete Street Improvements

Project Description

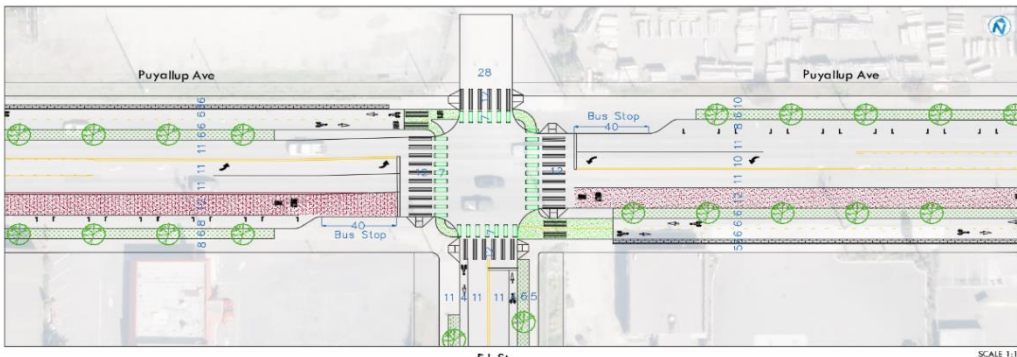
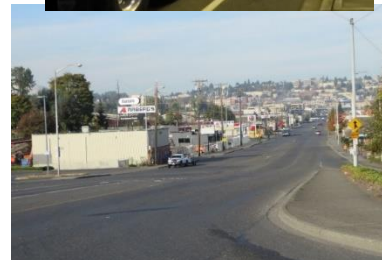
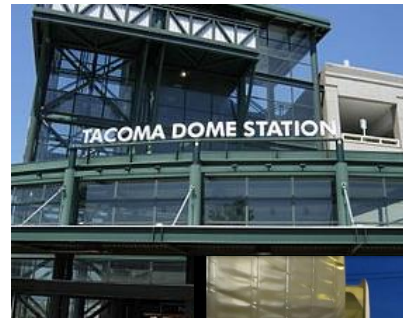
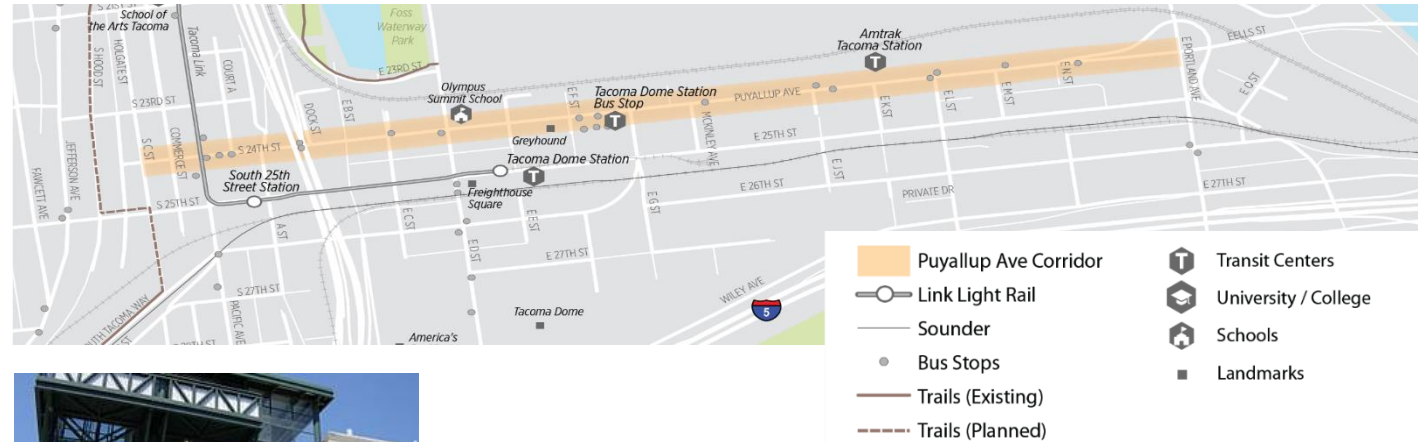
The project will provide 1.2 miles of freight, multimodal and community improvements from S. C Street, with connections to UW-Tacoma and the Prairie Line Trail, to Portland Avenue/I-5.

The project will completely reconstruct the aging roadway to support increasing freight traffic, upgrade all intersections, incorporate complete street elements such bicycle facilities, curb ramps, pedestrian scale lighting and wide sidewalks, signal and ITS improvements, and as this project supports one of the largest Transit Oriented Districts in the State, it will include Tacoma's first HOV/Transit lane running eastbound from Pacific Avenue to Portland Avenue.

Project Cost

Based on limited design and an unknown year of construction, the estimated cost for this project is \$20.3 Million, of which the City has already provided \$250,000 for planning and conceptual design, and received a \$2.1 Million PSRC grant for full design.

\$18 Million of Construction Phase funding is currently being sought.



Project Justification and Benefits

- **TRANSIT** The project supports one of the largest Transit Oriented Districts (TOD) in the state with connections to:
 - Sound Transit (Express, Tacoma LINK, Sounder and Light Rail)
 - Pierce Transit, Greyhound and Intercity Transit
 - WSDOT/Amtrak
- **FREIGHT** Improved Freight Access as Puyallup Ave is classified as a T3 freight corridor (current estimates indicate it is carrying higher/T2 loads)
- **CLIMATE/AIR QUALITY** An annual reduction of 182,000 vehicle miles traveled.
- **TRAILS** Improved access to the Prairie Line Trail and Thea Foss Waterway Esplanade. Future connectivity to the Tahoma to Tacoma and Puyallup Levee Trails.
- **REGIONAL GROWTH** Provides key infrastructure improvements to the downtown subarea, a state designated Community Empowerment Zone, a local business district, supporting access to the largest indoor entertainment venue in the state, the Tacoma Dome.

Tacoma to Puyallup Regional Trail Connection

The Tacoma to Puyallup Regional Trail Connection is an envisioned corridor between downtown Tacoma and downtown Puyallup for people walking & rolling that is physically separated from car traffic and safe for people of all ages and abilities.

In 2019, project partners undertook a Route Analysis Study to assess the feasibility of three potential routes to complete this crucial connection. A bicycle and pedestrian trail along the new SR 167 alignment was the preferred option to make this project a reality.

The construction of a portion of the trail (shown in blue) is funded as part of stages 1a and 1b of the SR 167 project. The next phase is Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Analysis (\$2.3 million). State funding for the PE/EA phase would allow WSDOT and project partners to develop the 30% preliminary design for the project, further refine the route along the new SR 167 alignment and into Tacoma, complete environmental analysis, and solidify a cost estimate for construction.



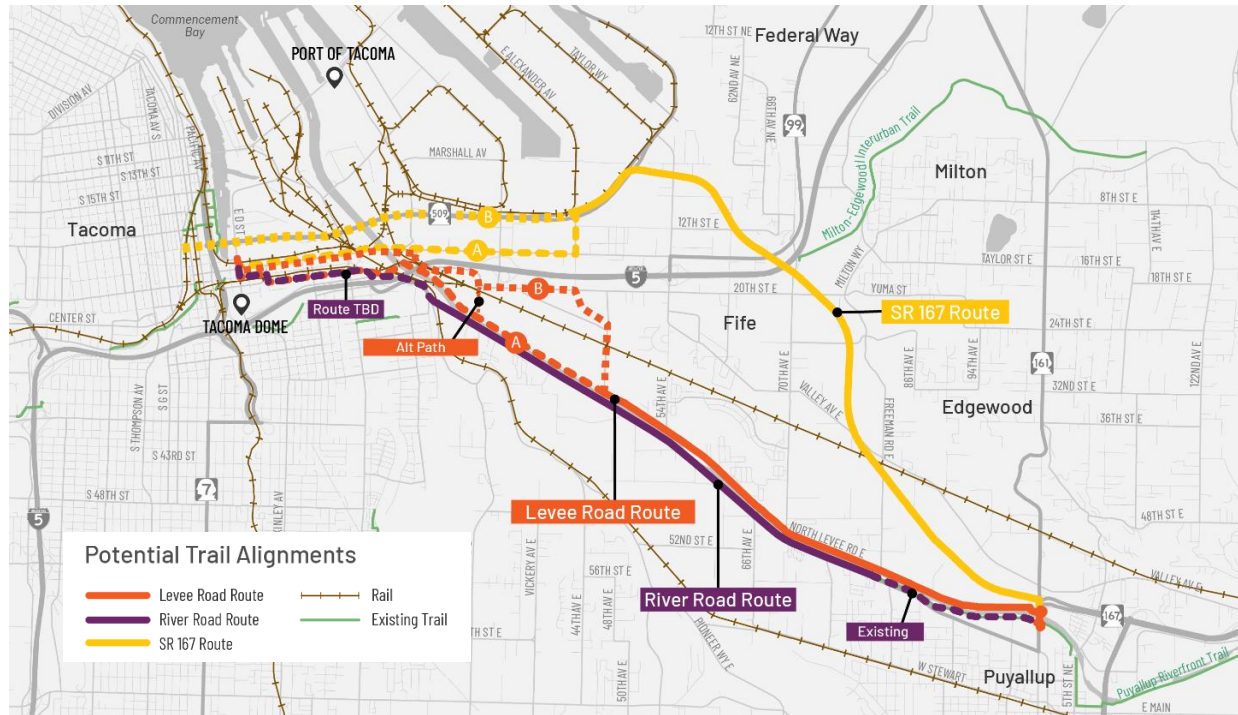
This \$2.3 million project would complete Preliminary Engineering for the sections shown in yellow, including connections to Puyallup Tribal lands, the City of Fife and the City of Puyallup. The PE phase will also select and design a route into Tacoma, either along SR 509 or via Pacific Highway, the Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge, and Puyallup Avenue.

Design for Stage 2 of SR 167 is slated to begin in mid-2021. By securing this funding as part of Washington State's 21-23 biennial budget, we can ensure that the trail design is in-step with the overall project design and timeline for SR 167.

Route Analysis Study

This funding request builds on the Tacoma to Puyallup Regional Trail Route Analysis, a 2019-2020 study funded by regional partners and WSDOT to collectively select a preferred route to complete a regional trail connection between Tacoma and Puyallup.

This Analysis evaluated three options for the new trail: Levee Road, River Road, and the new SR167 alignment.



Each potential alignment was assessed for safety, connections, accessibility, equity, environment and community fit, and cost, along with fatal flaws. Over 100 community members attended a community forum in July 2019 to share their feedback on the project and the route options.

Project partners selected the new SR 167 route as the highest priority connection. The next step for this preferred route is Preliminary Engineering.

For more information: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/projects/gateway/tacoma-puyallup-trail-study>



Tacoma to Puyallup Trail Community Forum 7/25/19

The Route Analysis Study was collaboratively funded by:

- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- City of Fife
- City of Puyallup
- City of Tacoma
- Metro Parks Tacoma
- Port of Tacoma
- Pierce County

Why This Project?

Transportation Access: Linking our Communities

The Tacoma to Puyallup Regional Trail Connection will provide safe access to jobs, schools, parks, and housing in our regional centers and beyond. Currently, there is no safe route between downtown Tacoma and downtown Puyallup for people travelling on foot or by bike. Natural barriers - including the Puyallup River and the 373-acre Swan Creek Park - make State Route 167/River Road the only direct route, but this 50 mph, five lane roadway has no sidewalks or bicycle facilities.

Connections to Transit

This project will connect local residents and visitors to two regional transit centers: the Tacoma Dome Station and the Puyallup Station as well as future Sound Transit Link Light Rail stations.

Equity

In Pierce County, low-income residents are more likely to bike and take transit than higher income residents (walking rates are consistently high across income levels). However, national data shows us that low income communities and people of color are less likely to have safe places to walk and bicycle in their neighborhoods. While active transportation is often framed as a great choice for getting around – for many folks it's the only feasible option – due to finances, age, or ability. A safe, connected, and accessible active transportation network is a critical element of an equitable transportation system.

Safety

There were 339 people hit by cars while walking or bicycling in Pierce County in 2019 – almost one person every day. We need to build safe active transportation infrastructure if we have any hope of reducing these collisions.

Climate Change

Transportation represents 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in Pierce County. Creating a safe and connected active transportation network is an essential element of addressing our climate crisis.

A Shared Priority

A safe bicycle and pedestrian connection between downtown Tacoma and downtown Puyallup is referenced in the adopted policy documents of every jurisdiction along the route, including:

- Puyallup Tribe of Indians Tribal Transportation Improvement Program 2016-2020
- PSRC 2014 Active Transportation Plan Regional Bicycle Network Gap Map
- Pierce County 2014 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan
- City of Fife Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element
- City of Puyallup Comprehensive Plan, River Road Corridor Plan
- City of Tacoma Transportation Master Plan

Tahoma to Tacoma Trail Network: \$13 Million per Year in Community Benefits

The Tacoma to Puyallup Connection is a critical missing link in the Main Alignment of the Tahoma to Tacoma Trail Network, a 62.5-mile trail from Tacoma's Point Defiance Park to Mount Rainier National Park. Once complete, the Main Alignment will provide approximately \$13 million per year in health, transportation, environmental, and economic benefits (www.pwi.org/tahomatotacoma).

For More Information

Anita Gallagher - Anita.Gallagher@cityoftacoma.org // (253) 591-5133
Assistant to the City Manager for Policy Development and Government Relations

Liz Kaster - lkaster@cityoftacoma.org // (253) 591-5380
Active Transportation Coordinator and Senior Planner