



**Pierce Transit Bus Rapid Transit  
Community Meeting #1 Summary  
Meeting Summary**

**Pierce Transit BRT Community Committee**  
Meeting #1 Summary  
Tacoma Public Library – Fern Hill Branch  
November 12, 2019

**Attendees**

| Name                             | Business / Organization   | In Attendance |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------|
| <i>Community representatives</i> |   |               |
| Jerrol                           | Downtown on the Go  |               |
| Cody                             | Pierce Transit Community Transportation Advisory Group            |               |
| Mike                             | American Pawn Brokers   |               |
| Athena                           | South End Neighborhood Council                                    |               |
| Jay                              | Bethel School District  | X             |
| Richard                          | Tacoma Transportation Commission                                  | X             |
| Larry                            | ForeverGreen Trails   |               |
| Michelle                         | Tacoma-Pierce Chamber of Commerce/Small Business Roundtable       |               |
| Cary                             | Pacific Avenue Business District/ South End Neighborhood Council  | X             |
| Jennifer                         | Hilltop Action Coalition  | X             |
| Lynnette                         | Eastside Council of Tacoma  | X             |
| Thomas                           | Bethel School District  | X             |
| Rick                             | Dome Business District  |               |
| Julian                           | Pierce County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (PC-ACAC) | X             |
| Joel                             | Franklin Pierce School District                                   | X             |
| <i>Project staff</i>             |   |               |
| Alex                             | Pierce Transit  |               |
| Kim                              | Pierce Transit  |               |
| Tina                             | Pierce Transit  | X             |
| <i>Facilitation staff</i>        |   |               |
| David                            | Envirolssues  | X             |

|       |              |   |
|-------|--------------|---|
| Nyles | Envirolssues | X |
| Olga  | Envirolssues | X |

**Agenda**

| Time      | What   | Who  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 5:30 p.m. | Welcome and meeting overview   | Tina Lee, Pierce Transit<br>David Gitlin, Envirolssues |
| 5:40 p.m. | Introductions<br>What organization or interest do you represent?<br>Why are you participating in this Committee? | All  |
| 6:00 p.m. | Committee purpose  | David Gitlin, Envirolssues                             |
| 6:10 p.m. | Project overview   | Tina Lee, Pierce Transit                               |
| 6:30 p.m. | Questions?   | All  |
| 6:45 p.m. | Review draft charter   | David Gitlin, Envirolssues                             |
| 6:50 p.m. | Next steps and action items  | David Gitlin, Envirolssues                             |
| 7:00 p.m. | Adjourn  | All  |

**Welcome and meeting overview**

David Gitlin, Envirolssues, began the meeting, thanking everyone for attendance and gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

**Introductions**

David Gitlin asked attendees to introduce themselves, identify their affiliation (organization), and summarize the reasons why they chose to attend the meeting.

*Key points identified:*

- Take away positive news about transportation development and regional growth
- To support project by distributing information to the Hilltop neighborhood
- Interest in transportation and understanding the development of the project and ability to share correct information with their community/organization’s constituents
- To represent the concerns of local businesses, particularly those within the Pacific Avenue Business District
- To ensure more connectivity and reliable transport is available for communities currently not served by the existing bus route

- Interest in expanding service to Bethel School District which is currently a medical and education desert. Most of the Bethel School District is currently located outside Pierce Transit's service boundaries.
- To expedite funding accessible projects and awareness of organizations
- To ensure that ADA standards are incorporated into the design and implementation of new transit projects in Tacoma

### **Committee purpose**

David Gitlin reviewed the purpose of the BRT Community Committee (Committee) with the group. The formal statement is as follows:

"The purpose of the Committee is to bring together representatives from transit users, local businesses, residential organizations, agencies, and other community-based organizations to learn more about the project, discuss its impacts, and share that information with their respective groups."

### **Project overview**

Tina Lee thanked everyone for their attendance and shared slides from a PowerPoint presentation overview of the Pierce Transit Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. The key takeaways were:

#### *Why BRT?*

- Faster ridership: Increase travel time by 10 minutes for downtown and 20 minutes to Tacoma Dome. Transit signal priority will provide green lights for buses in key locations along the project corridor.
- Faster boarding and improved stations: Riders will pay off-board at improved ticket vending machines and benefit from seeing real-time status with next bus information technology.
- Specialized bus design: Articulated buses and more seating capacity with a bus design that allows for improved accessibility (level boarding for easier wheelchair access, onboard bicycles allowed, passengers can board through multiple doors).
- Responds to existing needs: Pierce Transit Route 1 – which BRT will replace – is a high-ridership route. The project corridor is experiencing continued growth from Tacoma to Spanaway and includes six state-recognized opportunity zones, which provide tax incentives to help deliver better transportation options to this area.

#### *BRT project purpose*

- Increase transit ridership through enhanced transit service
- Deliver cost-effective service that provides capacity to meet future demand
- Promote transportation equity in the corridor by ensuring that transit service is accessible to all populations
- Improve multi-modal access and connectivity
- Support a regional vision for the community as documented in land use and transportation plans
- Enhance safety and security for transit patrons and public health overall
- Support existing economic activity and be a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and corridor redevelopment
- Promote environmental stewardship and sustainability

*Project cost and funding*

- The total project cost is \$150 million. A portion of this has been funded, \$60 million from Sound Transit 3 and \$30 million is coming from state and federal funds. The remainder has been requested in federal grants. The BRT project has been given a medium/high ranking and has a high chance of obtaining federal funding.
- BRT typical cost is about \$10 million per mile, which is more cost-effective than streetcars at \$30 million per mile or light rail at \$200 million per mile.
- Vehicle selection. Pierce Transit is considering running the vehicles on clean, compressed natural gas or making them battery-electric vehicles.
- Pierce Transit is 5-10% through the design phase and has hired WSP as a contractor design team using a "General Contractor Construction Management" approach. The current design follows recommendations of a prior feasibility study.

*BRT route explained*

When designing the project, Pierce Transit based the lane design on where the traffic slowdown points were most severe. These points were identified in the feasibility study and were based on Google and bus data.

## LEGEND

 BRT STATIONS

Diagram is not to scale.



7.3 Miles

Dark blue, 7.3 miles – BRT in curbside BAT lanes (buses running in the middle of the highway)



1.0 Miles

Light green, 1.0 mile – BAT lane (HOV-like lane for buses) cars can get into those lanes to turn



3.6 Miles

Orange 3.6 miles – Exclusive median lane (two lanes in the middle for buses), there will still be 2 general purpose lanes for regular traffic plus station platforms in the middle



2.5 Miles

Light blue 2.6 miles – pull in points for buses dispersed at pre-determined stop intervals

### Key decisions to dates

- July 2018: Pierce Transit Board adopted a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), which included the project mode (BRT), termini (Spanaway to Downtown Tacoma) and alignment (Route 1 with some modifications to the route in downtown Tacoma)
- September 2018: Pierce Transit submitted an FTA Small Starts application to seek the remaining 40% of needed project funding
- April 2019: Pierce Transit Board adopted the proposed station locations, BRT lane configuration (the Median-Hybrid alternative), and access routing (using E. 26th Street both in and out) to Tacoma Dome Station
  - Tina noted that there are still some opportunities for potential changes to the routing through downtown Tacoma based on continued input on Sound Transit's Tacoma Link route

### Outstanding decisions

- Pierce Transit is evaluating currently signalized intersections within the corridor for possible conversion to roundabouts; there are up to four potential roundabout locations throughout the corridor
- Pierce Transit is working with FTA to determine appropriate level of environmental review
- Pierce Transit is working with community members and businesses to discuss expected project impacts and tools to manage those impacts
- Pierce Transit will continue to share information with community and receive input

#### *Project timeline*

- 2019: Continue environmental review, design, and launch community committee
- 2020: Continue design (up to 30% design by first quarter)
- 2021-2023: Construction and BRT opening in 2023

#### *Property impacts*

- The Pierce Transit BRT project does not require the purchase of entire parcels, businesses or homes
- The total property impact is just over one acre along the entire 14-mile corridor
- The projected will impact slivers of property for about 140 parcels; this does not include temporary easements and right-of-way city property
- Some parking that is currently in public right of way may be affected
- Ability to make left turns along the corridor will be impacted
- Pierce Transit will identify and work directly with the affected property owners and will continue door-to-door outreach to share the most up-to-date information

#### **Questions/Comments**

##### *Community impacts*

- Q: Cary asked what the construction impacts will be? And whether the project will impact utilities?
- A: Tina L. responded that some water meters and most of the utility lines along the corridor will need to be moved, but the cost of this is incorporated into the project budget. For sidewalk and right-of-way adjustments, designers working directly with property owners to make this work for them (for example, driveway grades and other adjustments to accommodate special needs or specialized vehicle parking).
  
- Q: Lynnette asked where will the road widening be the biggest?
- A: Tina L. indicated that the orange sections on the flyer map are where the area required will be the widest, because the design includes up to 8 lanes and a station.
  
- C: Tina L. mentioned that WA state has a mandate for new projects to include roundabouts as a safer option. Recognizing that roundabouts may not always be the best option to accommodate all traffic flow (e.g. ambulances, articulated buses), this point is under discussion with the state representatives. Of the 19 roundabouts proposed by state regulation, Pierce Transit has negotiated to consider the implementation of only four along the route, three in Pierce County and one in Tacoma. Even if this is approved, the installation of roundabouts along the route will not require buying entire parcels of land.

##### *Stop locations*

- C: Cary highlighted that stop spacing should consider the elderly population and key senior living facilities to allow for access. Cary suggested considering starting the median south of 56th Street.

- A: Tina L. agreed but sited that traffic data may not support design changes that can accommodate both efficient travel and delaying the start of the median south of 56th Street. Richard agreed with this statement.
- C: Lynnette and Cary suggested that Pierce Transit should not stop Route 1 that currently runs to UW Tacoma or TCC.
- Q: Tina L. stated that Pierce Transit already decided to keep this portion of the Route 1 (which will be served by a new service, as a separate service from the BRT, once the BRT project is implemented).

#### *Equity & Inclusion*

- Q: Several audience members highlighted that there are many languages spoken along the corridor and asked about whether existing outreach includes adequate language accessibility?
- A: Tina L. responded that Pierce Transit can do more but offered interpretation services at multiple open houses in Spanish, Korean, and Russian. The Tacoma Community House and Tacoma Refugee Center were identified as being among the essential points to reach out to in order to connect with non-English speaking communities.
- Q: What does the current trip fare cost? What is the cost recovery rate?
- A: \$2 per trip (accessibility program riders \$1, children under 5 years of age can ride for free). There is about a 17% fair recovery. Each trip costs approximately \$5 for full fare.

#### **Review draft charter**

David Gitlin reviewed the community committee charter with the group and asked the group to voice any issues/concerns. The charter was approved, and the committee was formalized on Nov 12, 2019.

#### *Key points*

- The group will meet quarterly and the next meeting will be scheduled in early 2020.
- The Pierce Transit outreach team will share the date and location along with meeting documents ahead of time to allow members to review materials in advance of the meeting.
  - David Gitlin asked that attendees update their information on the sign in sheet to ensure that their credentials are accurately represented.
- Through these meetings Pierce Transit will share materials, listen, and explain how the suggestions and concerns of committee members have been incorporated/considered.
- EnviroIssues staff will facilitate the process and to help develop the best tools and practices to support committee engagement (and will remain a neutral party in the outcome of the process).

#### **Next steps and action items**

- Pierce Transit outreach team will work together to reserve the location and share materials for the next meeting in early 2020.
- The Pierce Transit outreach team will send BRT Community Committee members an updated packet from Meeting #1.
- The Pierce Transit outreach team will share information that can be distributed to the community:
  - Hilltop Action Journal, send a video or images to Jennifer Schaal (Hilltop Action Coalition)
  - Thomas (Bethel School District) would like to receive information that is easy to share with his group

- Pierce Transit will consider inviting project designers (e.g. Shawn Robertson) to figure meetings to better address design decisions.

**Adjourn**

David Gitlin adjourned the meeting.