



**Pierce Transit Bus Rapid Transit  
BRT Community Committee Meeting #2  
Summary**  
Updated: 3/6/2020

**Pierce Transit BRT Community Committee**  
Meeting #2  
Tacoma Public Library – Moore Branch  
February 19, 2020

**BRT Community Committee Purpose**

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.

**Attendees**

Name	Business / Organization	Email	In Attendance
<i>Community representatives</i>			
Jerrold Anonuevo	Downtown on the Go	<a href="mailto:jerrola@downtownonthego.org">jerrola@downtownonthego.org</a>	X
Joe Atkinson	Pacific Avenue Business Owner	<a href="mailto:joeatkinson1@yahoo.com">joeatkinson1@yahoo.com</a>	X
Cody Bakken	Pierce Transit Community Transportation Advisory Group	<a href="mailto:cbakken@piercetransit.org">cbakken@piercetransit.org</a>	X
Mike Bowerman	Pacific Avenue Business Owner	<a href="mailto:mike@americanpawnbroker.com">mike@americanpawnbroker.com</a>	X
Athena Brewer	South End Neighborhood Council	<a href="mailto:senco253@gmail.com">senco253@gmail.com</a>	
Jay Brower (secondary)	Bethel School District	<a href="mailto:jbrower@bethelsd.org">jbrower@bethelsd.org</a>	
Richard Gardner	Tacoma Transportation Commission	<a href="mailto:rgardner02@comcast.net">rgardner02@comcast.net</a>	X
Michelle Matheson	Tacoma-Pierce Chamber of Commerce/Small Business Roundtable	<a href="mailto:michellem@tacomachamber.org">michellem@tacomachamber.org</a>	
Jane Moore	ForeverGreen Trails	<a href="mailto:forevergreentrails@gmail.com">forevergreentrails@gmail.com</a>	
Cary Nilson	Pacific Avenue Business District	<a href="mailto:cary@mofps.com">cary@mofps.com</a>	X

Jennifer Schaal (secondary)	Hilltop Action Coalition	<a href="mailto:jenniferschaal@gmail.com">jenniferschaal@gmail.com</a>	
Lynnette Scheidt	Eastside Council of Tacoma	<a href="mailto:enact@live.com">enact@live.com</a>	X
Thomas Seigel (primary)	Bethel School District	<a href="mailto:tseigel@bethelsd.org">tseigel@bethelsd.org</a>	X
Rick Semple	Dome Business District	<a href="mailto:ricksemple@mac.com">ricksemple@mac.com</a>	
Cedric Silas	Transit user	<a href="mailto:casilas@att.net">casilas@att.net</a>	
Jane Trancho (primary)	Hilltop Action Coalition	<a href="mailto:jtrancho@gmail.com">jtrancho@gmail.com</a>	X
Julian F. Wheeler	Pierce County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (PC-ACAC)	<a href="mailto:julianfwheeler@aol.com">julianfwheeler@aol.com</a>	X
Joel Zylstra	Franklin Pierce School District	<a href="mailto:jzylstra@fpschools.org">jzylstra@fpschools.org</a>	X
<b>Project staff</b>			
Rebecca Japhet	Pierce Transit	<a href="mailto:rjaphet@piercetransit.org">rjaphet@piercetransit.org</a>	X
Kim McGilvery	Pierce Transit	<a href="mailto:kmcgilvery@piercetransit.org">kmcgilvery@piercetransit.org</a>	X
Tina Lee	Pierce Transit	<a href="mailto:tlee@piercetransit.org">tlee@piercetransit.org</a>	X
<b>Facilitation staff</b>			
David Gitlin	EnviroIssues	<a href="mailto:dgitlin@enviroissues.com">dgitlin@enviroissues.com</a>	X
Nyles Green	EnviroIssues	<a href="mailto:ngreen@enviroissues.com">ngreen@enviroissues.com</a>	X
Olga Kildisheva	EnviroIssues	<a href="mailto:okildisheva@enviroissues.com">okildisheva@enviroissues.com</a>	X
<b>Observers</b>			
Marty Campbell	Pierce County Councilmember, District 5	<a href="mailto:Marty.Campbell@piercecountywa.gov">Marty.Campbell@piercecountywa.gov</a>	X

**Meeting agenda**

Time	What	Who
5:30 p.m.	Welcome and meeting overview	Tina Lee, Pierce Transit David Gitlin, EnviroIssues
5:40 p.m.	Community Committee update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Welcome new members</li> <li>• Confirm charter</li> </ul>	All
6:00 p.m.	Project update	Tina Lee, Pierce Transit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project overview</li> <li>• Design update; planning, process and timeline</li> <li>• Soil sampling</li> <li>• Property coordination process overview</li> <li>• Station design update</li> <li>• Outreach lookahead</li> </ul>	
6:30 p.m.	Questions?	All
6:55 p.m.	Next steps and action items	David Gitlin, EnviroIssues
7:00 p.m.	Adjourn	All

**Materials shared during the meeting**

- BRT Community Committee draft charter
- Meeting presentation
- Project fact sheet

**Welcome and meeting overview**

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

**Introductions**

Because several Committee members that were not able to attend the first meeting or were recently added to the Committee roster were present, David Gitlin asked attendees to introduce themselves and identify their organization affiliation.

**Committee purpose**

David Gitlin then motioned to review the charter and asked for Committee’s verbal approval to ratify the charter.

He described the committee as having the following goals:

- Guide the process to identify the most effective BRT investments the region can make through continuous participation in facilitated discussions.
- Provide a platform for existing transit users to understand the BRT project and share their input on how proposed project plans would affect them.
- Advise Pierce Transit on the ways to best engage and hear from key interests and constituencies throughout the region, including historically underrepresented groups.
- Provide insights and information related to the pressures, issues, and trends impacting constituencies and businesses throughout the region.

- Assist Pierce Transit in understanding the high-level impacts, trade-offs, and opportunities associated with the planning process.

David Gitlin also reviewed the expected committee outcomes. These can be summarized as:

- Demonstrate how the insights and perspectives of all Committee members have been meaningfully considered in the next steps of the project process
- This Committee's work reflects a well-reasoned balance of input provided
- A fair and accurate record of the committee's deliberations has been prepared
- Members believe the Committee process has been complete, accurate, fair, and transparent

Mike Bowerman highlighted that while he recognizes that his views may not be shared by the rest of the group, he has some concerns about the project and is part of the Committee to voice and address these concerns.

David Gitlin responded that this is in line with the goals of the Committee, which should provide an opportunity for Pierce Transit to listen, understand, and address (either in the moment or at a more appropriate time) the identified concerns of the community. Committee members should then report how their concerns are being addressed back to their respective communities.

Cody Bakken asked what about document retention length (on the BRT website) and whether the various "lessons learned" would be summarized and shared as well. Tina Lee explained that the typical document retention time is 7 years and acknowledged that a "lessons learned" document would be helpful and should be considered.

David Gitlin motioned to approve the charter. There were no objections from the group and the charter was approved, pending any further discussion following the meeting.

### **Project update**

Tina Lee gave a general review of the Pierce Transit BRT project. She shared that the BRT will be a new line of service with speed and reliability benefits to the local community. The project will aim to improve bus service along the Pacific Avenue/State Route 7 between Downtown Tacoma and Spanaway. This is a highly used route, with ridership expected to grow to 2.2 million per year by 2040.

Mike Bowerman stated the BRT route will not completely replace Route 1. He wondered what proportion of ridership of Route 1 is represented within the updated BRT route.

Tina Lee explained that she does not have the exact numbers but added that many of the high boarding locations are within the corridor. She shared examples of other BRT programs in Snohomish County (Community Transit), King County (RapidRide), and Vancouver (the Vine) that have had positive impacts on transit speed, reliability, and economic development in the areas they serve. Pierce Transit BRT would similarly support the economic future of Pierce County. She added that this growth is already happening, and this project is just one way that Pierce Transit is planning for increased congestion expected in the region.

Tina Lee further explained the BRT fleet will feature 60-ft articulated buses, with 3 doors – to increase efficiency of boarding. She added that the existing 64 pairs of bus stops will be replaced by 32 pairs of stations, which will be similar to light rail stations. These stations will provide platforms level with buses,

which will allow for easier, faster boarding. Passengers would be able to store bikes on board. Buses will have on-board ticket vending/card readers and Wi-Fi for added comfort and utility.

Joe Atkinson asked whether there will be any parking associated with the BRT line?

Tina Lee responded that there will be some parking locations, but parking is not a major component of the project. Some parking will likely be available at the end of the route (by the Walmart Supercenter between 200<sup>th</sup> and 204<sup>th</sup> Street East), at the Roy Y parking area, and at a few other locations along the route. Additional parking is also be available at the Tacoma Dome. The aim of the BRT is to serve as a reliable and frequent local connection as well as a connection to the Sounder, Link (for airport access or trips to Seattle), and other regional services at the Tacoma Dome.

Tina Lee added that as jobs and housing density increase along the corridor transit connections will become increasingly important to support economic development and prosperity of the region. She added that there are six opportunity zones along the corridor, which provide significant tax incentives for cost-effective development along the corridor.

### **Project timeline**

Tina Lee reviewed the project timeline. She mentioned that most of the project feasibility study was completed in 2017. This included the assessment of corridor conditions, refining project purpose and needs, selecting BRT as the preferred mode of transit (based on cost, efficiency, and capacity). In 2018 and 2019, Pierce Transit worked with a number of federal, state, and local agencies to select the locally preferred alternative (LPA), submit application for additional funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), conduct additional traffic analysis, begin the initial environmental review, and conduct community outreach.

During 2020, Pierce Transit is aiming to meet a significant and ambitious goal of moving the project from 10% to 30% design by spring of 2020. This process will involve continued survey work along the corridor (most work to date has been done under the feasibility phase) but will now entail more design work, with potential for some design changes. Pierce Transit has hired a [Granite Construction Company](#) under a General Construction/Contractor Management agreement to carry out the project and will be working closely with them over the next several years.

### **Next steps**

The full environmental phase (NEPA and SEPA) will be complete when the project reaches 60% design, but progress will be shared throughout. NEPA work is already underway. Pierce Transit aims to begin construction in early 2021, with a goal of bringing the BRT route into operation in September 2023, dependent on requested funding.

### **Outstanding decisions**

Tina Lee identified a few outstanding decisions that will need to be made in the near term by Pierce Transit and their operating partners. These include:

- Evaluating currently signalized intersections within the corridor for possible conversion to roundabouts
- Completing environmental review in close coordination with Federal Transit Administration

- Working with community members and businesses to discuss expected project impacts and tools to manage those impacts

According to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) guidelines, roundabouts are the preferred approach in all new projects that impact intersections. As a result, at least three intersections along the BRT route have been identified as potential roundabout locations. To date technical data is not comprehensive enough to share their location with the Committee, but most potential locations are in the unincorporated portion of the route.

Cody Bakken asked how many locations were considered? Tina Lee responded that originally 24 intersection were identified, which was reduced to four. Based on additional requests from jurisdiction two more locations were added. To date, four locations are strong candidates under evaluation.

Joe Atkinson asked what makes an intersection suitable for a roundabout?

Tina Lee responded that roundabout locations are evaluated on the basis of the volume of traffic, road width, speed of traffic within a roundabout, and impacts to adjacent property (e.g. need for property acquisition).

Joe Atkinson added that he was concerned about the safety of multi-lane traffic moving through the roundabout. Tina Lee responded that the design team will work closely with WSDOT and City traffic engineers and follow guidelines and safety standards.

Tina Lee agreed to share the preliminary list of potential roundabout locations with the group electronically, and will follow up in advance of the next BRT Community Committee meeting.

### **Route Design**

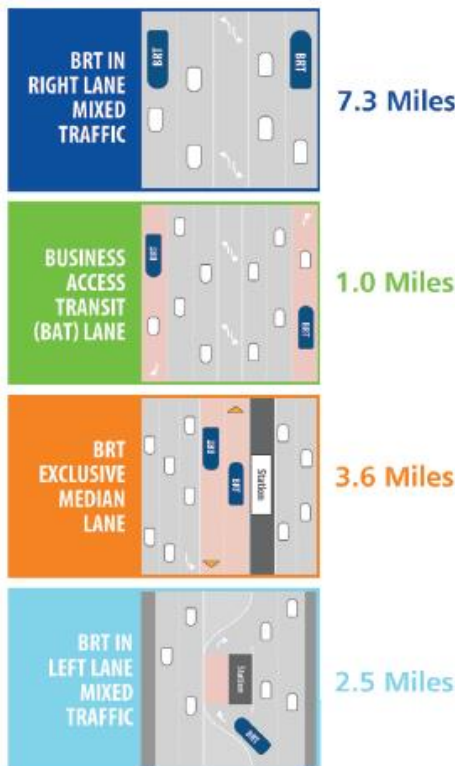
Tina Lee added that Pierce Transit is currently working on refining the specifics of the locally preferred alternative route (LPA) design. She shared a map of the lane design and reviewed the different lane designations with the Committee. Key features include:

- the entire BRT route includes 14.4 miles, with median and curbside operation
- 3.6 miles are median lanes
- 1 mile is business access transit (BAT) lanes
- 9.8 miles are mixed traffic operation (right or left lane)
- 26th street turnaround to serve the Tacoma Dome Station

**LEGEND**

□ BRT STATIONS

Diagram is not to scale.



Dark blue, 7.3 miles – BRT in general traffic lanes

Light green, 1.0 mile – Business Access Transit (BAT) lane – a HOV-like lane for buses, cars can get into those lanes to turn; these are located primarily in the Pierce County portion of the route

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

Light blue, 2.6 miles – pull in points for buses dispersed at pre-determined stop intervals, stop located in the middle lane

Tina identified one major issue the design has encountered so far, which is associated with the load bearing of the 26<sup>th</sup> Street bridge in Tacoma. The bridge was re-evaluated after Pierce Transit began the route planning process. The bridge loading has been downgraded to 48,000 pounds, which is well below the weight of the proposed 60’ BRT bus (when fully loaded). As a result, Pierce Transit is working with the City of Tacoma and other local stakeholders like the Dome Business District to identify an alternative. This may include a temporary detour until the bridge is brought back up to a higher load-bearing capacity or permanent if no such upgrades are feasible.

**Traffic analysis**

Pierce Transit has been conducting additional traffic analysis on SR 7 from 121<sup>st</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup>. This analysis is now complete. Tina highlighted that Pierce Transit would like to conduct additional analysis on side streets, particularly for S Yakima Ave and E McKinley Ave, but this will likely occur in the very near future.

Mike Bowerman and Joe Atkinson inquired if this analysis can be done while this route is being designed, citing concerns about the long-term impact of traffic detour congestion (i.e. commuters getting accustomed to the detour route and continue driving the detour route when the construction is complete).

Tina Lee acknowledged this concern and said that Pierce Transit will continue working with Granite to understand and minimize both short- and long-term impacts. Shea added that Pierce Transit is looking at other agencies that have recently completed transit projects of this scale for best practices (e.g. Sound Transit's approach to community engagement and business support during construction).

Joel Zylstra added that Pierce Transit should consider C Street (near the Sprinkler Recreation Center) for potential traffic analysis as well.

### **Upcoming work**

Tina Lee explained that some exploratory construction work will begin along the corridor in Spring 2020. The first of which will include soil testing. Soil testing is a typical pre-construction practice in which a series of exploratory holes will be dug along the proposed path of the BRT project to understand soil conditions of the roadway prior to construction. The work occurring along the corridor will include drilling of approximately 60 holes (6 inches in diameter) and will occur over 3 weeks. Work will begin on the south end of the corridor and continue north, following the schedule below:

- March 2-6 Spanaway/Parkland
- March 9-13 Parkland/South Tacoma
- March 16-20 South Tacoma/Downtown

Notifications regarding this work and potential impacts are being sent out to more than 23,000 households along the corridor this week (Feb 17-21, 2020). Tina added that these mailed postcards will also include information about upcoming door-to-door outreach and open houses. Additionally, this information will be shared via the email notification (GovDelivery) for those signed up for the notifications through "rideBRT.com".

Cody Bakken asked if the soil testing be comparing soils to past samples? Tina responded that the analysis will primarily inform the design and construction team about the density and other construction-relevant features of the soil in order to identify the type of footing required (e.g. identify locations where asphalt can be located and where asphalt will need to be removed and replaced by concrete).

### **Property coordination process**

Tina Lee discussed the expected property impacts, suggesting that the project is not expected to require the purchase of entire parcels, businesses, or homes. The total property impact is expected to be just over one acre along the entire 14-mile corridor. However, she added that this one-acre impact will be distributed over more than 140 parcels (likely impacting 1-2-foot slivers of property) in addition there is a high likelihood of loss of parking that is currently in public right of way.

Tina explained that the FTA prohibits Pierce Transit from beginning any official discussions with property owners until the environmental assessment is complete (expected in June 2020). Tina added that Pierce Transit is hiring a real estate firm to handle this work. Real estate conversations with the public are expected to begin in June 2020. This process will include the following general steps:

- Affected property owners will receive a notice from Pierce Transit in summer 2020
- Letter will explain the coordination process and what property owners can expect



Additional details will be available following a detailed right-of-way review, which is currently underway

Tina Lee gave an example of the ideal scenario with the building of the Park & Ride in Spanaway where negotiations were quick, with a win-win outcome for both parties.

Mike Bowerman asked about impacts to property that can't be replaced, like an iconic tree that may need to be removed as a result of the construction, or change in driveway slope that may impact private property accessibility and what Pierce Transit's process will be for handling issues of this type.

Tina Lee responded by saying that these issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis and Pierce Transit will work directly with property owners to understand and resolve issues. Pierce Transit has been identifying and tracking these issues which they are also sharing with the designer to understand how some impacts might be avoided entirely. Tina added that Pierce Transit will be working with individuals to address the loss of parking as a result of construction.

Several members asked to see how specific properties might be impacted. Tina added that once the design is further along, Sean Robertson, project construction manager, can help mark the property line and help community understand specific impacts.

Mike Bowerman asked about how public right of way is identified and if it was possible to give a rule-of-thumb estimate for what would be considered public right of way. Richard Gardner suggested that 50 ft from center of the road may be a potential rule of thumb but added that this should be confirmed. Tina Lee added that the rideBRT.com website includes conceptual plan documents which display right of way lines and could be accessed by interested parties.

Joe Atkinson requested an itemized list of the parking impacts be shared with the Committee or community. He added that this could be a simple table identifying businesses that may be impacted. He added that this would allow them the opportunity to plan for these impacts, for example loss of business or property value due absence of parking.

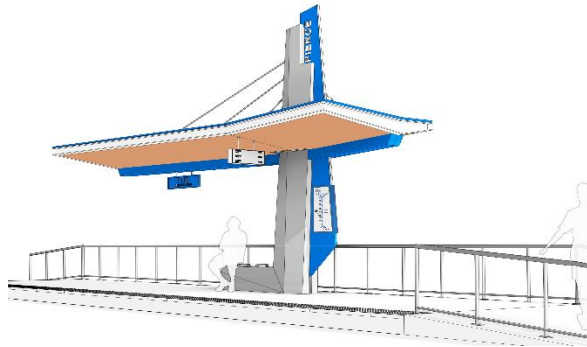
Tina Lee added that she will investigate the potential for creating the requested table and suggested that something similar already exists as part of the "Environmental Critical Issues" document but may just need to be amended to include business name/owner information.

### **Branding and station design**

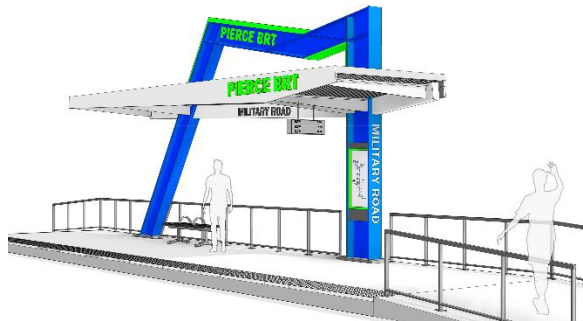
Currently, BRT naming and legal review is underway. Additionally, upon the completion of the project, the existing Route 1 bus stops will be replaced by BRT stations. Designs of these stations are currently being evaluated as well.

Tina shared some of the draft designs with the Committee to gauge their reactions. These included:

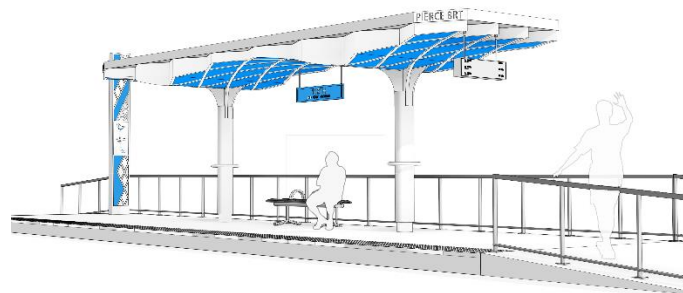
- Suspension – this design is a tribute to architectural design of the region
  - Committee impressions: looks like a drive-through; concerned about safety during an earthquake; if design is kept may consider how they could make it look more like the Tacoma Narrows Bridge; may cost more for the roof than other designs



- Mountain – this design is intended to reflect the mountainous terrain of Pierce County
  - Committee impressions: too industrial and heavy; high potential for people climbing on the structure and unintended graffiti



- Ripples – this design is intended to represent flowing water, reflective of the different types of water bodies characteristic of the region
  - Committee impressions: Preference for this design; lighter; looks nice; potentially more cost-effective



Tina Lee added that the designs do not have a wind or rain screens, but the designers considered how the wind and water will be moving based on the station location and incorporated design elements to reduce the potential impact of the outside elements on riders waiting for transit. Tina added that because of the frequency of buses, waiting times should be short and less than 10 minutes.

**Several questions and comments were shared by Committee members:**

- **Question:** Are the roofing dimensions the same?  
**Answer:** Yes, roof dimensions should be similar, but roof height will differ between station designs.
- **Comment:** Committee members would like to see some wind screen or glass because outside conditions can be quite uncomfortable from fall to spring and even a 10-min waiting time can be enough to negatively impact riders
- **Question:** What height is the ceiling?  
**Answer:** Tina Lee will share this information with Tom Seigel.
- **Question:** What is the height of the platform?  
**Answer:** The platform height can vary from 9-14 inches depending on the location and final design. The platform length will be 40-60 ft.
- **Comment:** Design should consider a protective barrier and puddling potential over time
- **Question:** What would the material for the ripples design under roof be?  
**Answer:** Pierce Transit will work with the designers to use practical, high quality materials that fit the area

### **Outreach lookaheads**

Tina Lee shared Pierce Transit's upcoming outreach strategy for spring 2020, which will include:

Five in-person open houses, with three held on weekdays (Tuesday-Thursday) and one on Saturday, during the following times:

- April 14: University of Washington – Tacoma from 4:30 – 7:00 pm
- April 15: Moore Library from 4:30 – 7:00 pm
- April 16: Parkland Spanaway Library from 4:30 – 7:00 pm
- April 18: Fern Hill Library from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- April 21: Sprinker Recreation center from 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm
- An additional online open house will also be available

Tina Lee asked the Committee members if they wanted the next Community Committee meeting to occur before or after the open houses?

Cody Bakken responded that he would like to have the opportunity to review the materials in advance of the open houses but was also unsure of his availability during April to attend an in-person meeting. Cody Bakken and Tom Seigel asked whether documents could be shared electronically instead?

Tina Lee and David Gitlin responded that the online open house could be shared with the Committee members so they could have access to these materials before the next meeting which will be planned for May 2020.

Tom Seigel asked about the specific property location that is being acquired for parking. Tina Lee responded that it is a 7-acre parcel on the west side of SR 7, south of the Arco station.

Tom Seigel followed up with a question about whether there are any considerations regarding stop locations, that line up with any future east-west route planning.

Tina Lee responded that because the area being discussed is not in the service area it is not part of the active discussion. She added that there are no current plans to share the bus stations locations with local bus routes.

Tom Seigel asked if there will be a station near 176<sup>th</sup> and which side of the intersection it would be on.

Tina Lee stated that she did not know the exact location but highlighted that the location preferences are generally given to the far side of intersection (in the direction of travel).

Cary Nilson asked how his previously stated concerns about the loss of parking near Big John's Trophies and proximity of bus stops to senior living centers were being considered.

Tina Lee responded that there have not been any changes to the locations of the stations because of the limitations of associated with traffic flow. Tina added that station spacing is on average 6 blocks apart (based on highest boarding locations) – this should amount to a maximum additional 5-8 min walk to the next station. She added that Pierce Transit is working on other accessibility improvements such as new sidewalks. Tina added that for mobility impaired individuals, other options such as SHUTTLE paratransit service, for those individuals who are qualified, may provide a better option than the BRT.

Jane Trancho asked what payment methods will be used on the BRT system?

Tina Lee stated that riders will be able to use ORCA cards, but additional options like Hopthru (a mobile app) and cash-based options all being considered. She added that various fare enforcement options are also being evaluated.

### **Adjourn**

David Gitlin adjourned the meeting and stated that a meeting summary will be shared with the committee soon for review and comment.