

Walk & Roll Pierce County - Agenda

February 21, 2023

Attendees:

- Raichle Dunkeld, WRPC
- Shawn Phelps, Pierce County Planning
- Jenn Halverson Huehn, TPCHD
- Diane Evans, TPCHD
- Tracy Oster, DOTG
- Connor Schultz, Safe Streets
- Larry Leveen, FGT
- Meagan Kula, Metro Parks Tacoma
- Liz Kaster, City of Tacoma Public Works
- Brianne Blackburn, PC Parks
- Kyla Wilson, Pierce County Sustainable Resources
- Shayla Miles, Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition
- Melodi Yanik,

Agenda:

- Introductions & Ice breaker (10) hard start at 2:02pm
- WSDOT Presentation - South Sound Multimodal Connectivity Study (45)
- Legislative Session Update, including Signing “Free to Walk campaign” (**decision**) (15)
- January Report - questions for Raichle (5)
- Member Updates (15)

Introductions (name, affiliation, pronouns, question)

WSDOT South Sound Multimodal Connectivity Study

- Project been going for about 8 months
- WSDOT doesn't usually look at all state highways **and** all the local roadways in between, making this study unique
 - We're learning along the way in how to do our best
- Legislative Provisos:
 - SB 5165 Section 218 2021 Legislative Session, study SR 161 westward
 - SB 5689, Section 305, 2022 Legislative Session, connections between 161 and 162 via military road (expanding the study area)
- Problem Statement:
 - Priority Rating of different things that came up:
 - Safety priority not meeting Vision Zero goals
 - Multimodal options lacking

- North/South roadway congestion
 - Freight access and congestion
 - East/West connectivity Gaps
 - Resiliency, environment and climate change concerns
 - Health and mobility disparities
- Challenges: it's a very large study area, some places are going to be more heavily impacted than others
- Approach has pivoted (see later in the conversation and notes)
- **Target Zero Goals**
 - Folks advocating on congestion reduction, less congestion = more safety mentality
 - Reduced traffic and volumes has not led to a difference in fatal and serious injury crashes
 - We will be prioritizing strategies that prioritize vision zero
 - We will be addressing connectivity and congestion, but that will not be the main objective
- **Key Study Area Trends**
 - Trends in the study area: Canyon road - serious injury crashes tended upward
 - Crash Data Shown - Bike/Ped Serious Injury and Fatal Crashes
 - Compared with gaps in sidewalks - strong correlation between
 - Schools and other areas noted for gap closure possibilities
- 2050 baseline for peak direction traffic noted, comparing total streamlined performance (roads capacity) or individual roads over capacity, but in total available capacity on lesser used roads
 - Rather than looking at total capacity change, looking at targeted capacity change to distribute traffic more effectively
 - Question from Larry: Note, a measure of "1.0" is at 100% capacity, whereas if it is shown as a "1.4," the road is over capacity
 - The difference between 1.0 and 1.1 is the difference between moving traffic and gridlock
 - Question from Cam: Use around the metro area has leveled out over the day, but is this data (which is shown from 2018) still current?
 - Response: The data is taken from 2022, but the photo is from 2018 so it is current data
 - We've noticed an uptick in midday, and evenings have returned to pre-covid usage
 - 2050 Baseline Transit Service BRTs on SR 7 and 167
- Community Outreach
 - Open House Dec 1-17, just under 1600 completed questionnaires, 11,600 unique visits
 - .5% sample rate over the entire study area
 - Did not do well getting the word out to underrepresented communities (Latinx, Asian, Black, Spanish language households)
 - WSDOT social media platforms were not enough

- Only 1 questionnaire was completed in spanish, and only one was completed in Korean, all others were english
- Preliminary Feedback from outreach
 - Building capacity and improving mobility **while** looking for multimodal options such as walking rolling and transit
 - Lots of folks wanted to do nothing/keep it rural
 - Modal separation
 - Match infrastructure growth with population growth
 - Expanded transit service
 - New roadway connections
 - More roadway maintenance
 - New
- New or different from TAC and PAC
 - Lighting
 - Speeds and traffic enforcement
 - Less emphasis on freight mobility
 - Transit divide
 - Less emphasis on economic vitality
 - Complete cross-base highway (out of scope, de-funded by legislature and removed from plans, this will not be a part of the recommendations)
 - Airport siting (out of scope)
- Question from Raichle: How do you plan to change your strategy to reach the communities you missed?
 - We don't know yet but will be leaning more heavily with
 - Blue Zones Executive Director is now on the project (Larry)
 - Spanish Speaking Radio Station (Shawn)

Study Pivot - Subarea Focus

- Central Subarea, challenge - lots of the problems come together and have tension with each other
- Southern Subarea, lots of gaps
- SR 7 Subarea, to the West, WSDOT has over \$100 Million planned in preservation projects, BRT coming in, roundabouts planned
- 161/162 Subarea, how to get traffic up and down the hill and provide relief to 162
- Sidewalk gaps, discontinuous county roads, not great alternative routes to highways, looking at the four areas, they need to be addressed as four subareas. Tests are currently underway
 - We understand the tradeoffs of different approaches, but we need to think about what the preferences are in each one
 - Testing and data in our traffic models to answer some of these questions

Initial Strategies List

- Initial list ~400 strategies

- Legacy projects like comprehensive plans, TIP, TIF, STIP, Safety Plans
 - Those projects from 30-50 years ago may not be in alignment
 - Too many options that are not consistent with each other
- New strategies address gaps, we are weeding through these ideas now
- Central tests
 - State Highway focus
 - County Arterial focus
 - Operations and management focus
 - Filling in gaps in each of the areas
- Focused on the interaction between the subareas as well, how each improvement will impact the other areas
- Final study report in early fall 2023
 - Fine-tune recommendations
 - They will be focused on a systems approach
 - Crash prevention will be prioritized
 - Multimodality also prioritized (lots of funding available in this area)
 - Hoping this study will provide the basis for the upcoming work
 - Shared partnership in implementation, but we must continue communicating with one another to get the grants available and implement the strategies

Question: Highway 512 Study? SR 161 Master Plan?

- 512 Study focused on mainline operations and interchanges on 512, primarily focused on interchange operations
 - We recognize obstacles presented by 512
 - Timeline identical to this study
 -

Question: How are you thinking about active transportation safety considering there is an unconnected network right now?

- Pulling together all of the gaps and overlaying basic expectations for state on complete streets, counties and cities, expectations for crossings etc
 - Analyze costs to bring roads into compliance for multimodal access and include total cost within the report as a top tier priority
 - Avoid recommending any specific mode of active transportation more than another
 - Certain kinds of AT can be opportunistic, including funding programs, so we want to make sure it is known that all of the modalities are involved in the plan itself

Question: What is WSDOT's role in implementing this study?

- Any time there is a new highway or states project, we will address complete streets and will provide accommodations as needed for the project or specify the timeframe

- We cannot mandate that pierce county or any other jurisdiction develop something
- We can only encourage, develop our own plans so that we promote funding projects, assist in going after grant programs
- In areas of the state highway that are particularly difficult to implement complete streets, we will partner with county or other jurisdictions to promote projects in adjacent corridors
- This study is the first step in complete streets/ active transportation implementation

Question: Seeing a tension between safety and capacity, what is your opinion on this?

- Capacity limitation may be on the table, within complete streets direction, in locations of tight right of ways, narrowing the road is on the table
- Looking at ways to change the character of the cross-section is also possible
- Not putting AT users right next to traffic, calming traffic or providing greater separation
 - These details may not be a part of this study, but of individual projects related
 - SR 7 project is where some of that implementation will be found

Question: Safety and congestion - how will that factor into how solutions are modeled? Is capacity attempted to remain at 1.0 or if capacity is significantly increased, is there another corresponding active transportation

- Starting point is recognizing that people's congestion experience is related to 512 interchanges
- As we learn more from that study we will think about how our ideology can be realigned.
- People acknowledge that congestion is a part of a healthy economy, we need to avoid gridlock more than anything else
 - We don't want to provide a roadway system for primarily peak hour use
 - Don't expect to see state highway expansion around SR7 or 161
 - Costly changes for SR512, but in the remainder of the study area imagine much more targeted, and less focus on state highway system

Next Steps

- Policy and performance
- March/April draft recommendation for technical committees

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January Report - questions for Raichle, announcements: Raichle moving on to another role

- Raichle moving on to another role
- Admin team is working on next steps

Member updates

Meagan with Metro Parks

- Thursday at STAR Center - Co-Create to Recreate, encourage partners and community members to be there <https://www.metroparkstacoma.org/event/co-create-star/>
 - 6-7:30pm, providing dinner, hearing from community members, feedback, discussion
 - Holding events at each quadrant of the city, this one for South Tacoma

Tracy Oster DOTG

- Friday Forum at 12 noon, "When a sidewalk isn't enough"
- Hybrid meetings
- <https://downtownonthego.com/about/news-events/friday-forums-2023-feb>

Shawn Phelps Pierce County Planning

- Received SS4A Grant! 400K for Pierce County
- PSRC will be holding and distributing the money
- External outreach beginning next quarter

Shayla Miles Foothills Rails to Trails

- Spring to Trails, strategic planning process and fun for folks
- <https://foothillscoalition.org/event-5014569>

Kyla Wilson Pierce County Sustainability

- Sprinkler tree planting event with Sustainability
<https://tacomatreefoundation.org/green-blocks-parkland>

Larry Leveen

- Urgent proposal to sell off a portion of the city
- Losing 400k/year which is a lot of the city budget
- Requirement to maintain freight and rail lines, estimated \$40 Million in cost incurred over the next 10 years to continue operation the rail line
- The proposed area to sell is the core of the current Pierce County Regional Trail Plan
 - If it is sold, it will only ever be repurchased at great personal cost
 - City of Tacoma is not prepared to sell in a resolution being proposed tonight
- Problems: capital investments and loss of capital yearly
- Other options: file with federal government to no-longer consider it as an active freight line it doesn't need to be maintained as such, sell the only section with customers to WRL, eliminating the annual operating loss
- There is a momentum to this issue, it was pulled from a previous agenda but no change has been made
- This is currently a "publicly owned asset" and it will be hard to get it back
- Council meeting tonight will be the vote to pass the resolution

Council Agenda:

<https://cityoftacoma.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=A&ID=1065045&GUID=622E4BF3-A9AC-49A3-A409-5AA883ABFB17>

Zoom meeting: www.zoom.us/j/84834233126 Passcode: 349099

Hero points: <https://goo.gl/maps/4m3CWxi3r3H2NPcK8> (Council chambers is downstairs)