

Summary Notes

Pierce County
Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC)
Thursday, February 27, 2020
9:00AM. to 11:22AM

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Call to Order: 9:05AM

Roll Call: 9:10AM

Voting Members: Brian Devereux, Deryl McCarty, Jane Moore, Jessie Gamble for Jeremiah Lefranca, Katie Wilcox, Lindsey Sehmel, Scott Jones, Shelly Schlumpf, Steve Gordon, Tom Pierson. There is a quorum.

Absent: Paul Lubbesmeyer.

Non-Voting Members: Dennis Hanberg, Hugh Taylor, Diane Evans.

Pierce County PPW Staff: Brian Stacy, Rory Grindley, Jesse Hamashima, Clint Ritter, Leticia Neal, Neil Quisenberry.

Pierce County Non PPW Staff: Amy Cruver (County Council Office), Brianne Blackburn (Parks & Recreation), Kimberly Freeman (Parks & Recreation), Councilmember Dave Morell, Councilmember Marty Campbell.

Introductions: Shelly Schlumpf (Main Street Elements), Deryl McCarty (Community Groups), Rory Grindley (Traffic Engineer), Scott Jones (Newland Communities), Tom Pierson (Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber), Dennis Hanberg (Planning and Public Works Director), Lindsey Sehmel (Pierce Transit), Jane Moore (Forever Green Trails Rep/Non-Motorized), Clint Ritter (Program Development Supervisor, Planning and Public Works, Office of County Engineer), Leticia Neal (Transportation Improvement Manager, Planning and Public Works, Office of County Engineer), Brian Devereux (Puyallup School District), Brianne Blackburn (Pierce County Parks), Hugh Taylor (Office of Pierce County Council), Brian Stacy (County Engineer), Councilmember Morell (District 1 Pierce County Council), Jesse Hamashima (Transportation Planning Supervisor, Office of County Engineer), Katie Wilcox (Wilcox Family Farms), Steve Gordon (25 years Chief Operating Officer, Gordon Trucking), Diane Evans (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department), Jessie Gamble (Master Builders Association).

Approval of Agenda:

Ground Rules/Administrative Guidance: If you want to speak, raise your hand. Press *6 on your phone to mute/unmute. Press *9 on your phone to be recognized. Public will be muted until the end of meeting where there will be a Public Comment session. There will be no audio or video recording of this meeting. However, there will be summary notes.

Councilmember Guidance: Councilmember Dave Morell provided the commission some guidance. He thanked the staff for putting this meeting together. There was a rundown last week where priorities were discussed. Continue to look at funding as a priority. We want to have shovel ready projects if a federal stimulus becomes available. The commission needs to prioritize projects. He wants eyes on all things, none left in the weeds. Councilmember Morell wants free debate. Council could look at extending the deadline date of July 30, 2020, for recommendations from the TAC regarding the Resolution, but he wishes to keep it as it is for now. He feels we can continue where TAC left off.

Changes to TAC Membership: This is the first meeting with Shelly Schlumpf as a board member.

December's Presentation: Will send out final PDF after this meeting.

Traffic Volumes: We have been tracking traffic volumes since the Pandemic. There was a significant decrease mid to late March. Volumes are starting to increase. Based on count locations, traffic volumes are 22% less than during this period last year. Traffic counts are based on 13 count locations on County roadways. The question came up whether there is a difference in traffic with schools being out versus schools being in session. Pierce County is not currently tracking that type of statistic.

County Road Fund Resolution R2019-133 Presentation – Letticia Neal, PE, and Clint Ritter, PE: Clint Ritter gave the presentation. The key issues needing input in order to advance are consensus on funding need(s), funding options to rule out, funding options of interest, program size, program duration in terms of years, construction completed within program duration, and priority group focus.

County road system needs are based on MOPIA: maintenance, operations, administration, preservation, and improvements. For 2020, \$84,774,000 is allocated into these groups.

Funding needs are broken down into five project types: capacity, economic development, preservation (CIP), safety, and active transportation. Total need is \$1058M. Total yearly average is \$52.9M. Twenty-year program need of Active Transportation is broken down to \$40M for ADA transition plan, \$20M for sidewalk construction, and \$20M for active transportation construction. Preservation (CIP) are preservation projects of significance that need to be programmed in the 6-year program.

Existing average revenues (TIF, grants, REET 2, bond obligation, and construction fund) total \$31M yearly; whereas, needed expenditures (capacity, economic development, preservation, safety and active transportation) averages \$52.9M/year. The net yearly gap is \$21.9M.

Revenue funding options include Levy Lid-Lift, REET 2, Transportation Benefit District related motor vehicle registration (license tabs) or sales tax funded, Internal Transfer/Diversion Restoration, and other taxes such as local gas tax, sales tax, B&O tax, red light cameras, etc. Levy lid-lift and internal transfer/diversion restoration are significant revenue potential. REET 2 is a moderate revenue potential.

Compared 2018 County Road Levy with other counties that are comparable to Pierce County. We transferred \$2.8M to the Sheriff Department for traffic policing.

Local sales tax is not an option for revenue source. There is no further legislative authority for this form of taxes for Counties. Local Business & Occupation (B&O) Tax is not an option since it is only available to Cities and Towns. There is no legislative authority for this form of taxes for Counties. Local gas tax is not an option as well. Pierce County is part of a regional transit district and cannot levy a gas tax.

The top funding mechanisms worth looking at further are the Levy Lid-Lift, REET 2, and Law Enforcement Transfer/Diversion Options. REET 2 has potential for extending sunset date.

Discussed five different funding package hypothetical options. Option 1 includes traffic enforcement transfer and can generate \$2,950,000 per year. Option 2 includes traffic enforcement transfer and levy lid-lift which can generate \$13,350,000 per year. Option 3 includes REET 2, levy lid-lift, and traffic enforcement transfer and can generate \$17,350,000 per year. Option 4 includes the same package as Option 3 but increases the levy lid-lift. Option 4 can generate \$22,650,000 per year. Option 5 has the same package as Option 4 but increases the levy lid-lift even more. Option 5 can generate \$28,050,000 per year.

Discussion: Currently, we have \$4M per year in payback for prior bonds issued. That debt is paid off using REET 2. If we have non shovel projects ready and funds become available, can you pay off existing bonds with those funds? It was noted that we are not aware of any funding that would allow us to pay towards bond debt. We must adhere to the requirements of funding guidelines/timelines. We also need resources (personnel) which we might not have at that time due to current hiring freeze.

Can we require a city/town to put in B&O money if we are improving roads in conjunction with that municipality? We cannot spend road fund on a city/town, only general fund.

Project types (capacity, economic development, preservation, safety, active transportation) can cross over and have benefits in another project type. It was suggested to prioritize projects looking at multi-beneficial project types.

The County has a Comprehensive Transportation plan that has policies to guide us. If policies would like to be reviewed, the County can provide them.

A question came up regarding how various funding mechanisms are approved. The levy lid-lift requires voter approval. REET 2 is an internal council action. Current REET 2 sunsets in 2036. Law enforcement transfer is an internal budgeting decision approved by the Council. Diversion is voter approved.

Jesse and Clint are working with Berk Consulting to validate information that was provided as well as how to implement options.

Need to look at projects and come up with priority list. We need to use a measuring tool. What are we looking at for each project? All projects types have different technical metrics for evaluation. The process also involves subjective measures and professional judgement.

Discussed the lack of awareness of transfer of funds to traffic enforcement. Citizens are going to want to know where our transportation funds are going.

It was noted funds that are transferred to traffic enforcement are County Road funds and can be used for any of these project types. Other funding such as traffic impact fees have more stringent restrictions on use.

Motion to Table: Lindsey Sehmel motioned to table discussions until next meeting due to needing more information on allocation of funding to project types. Seconded by Jane Moore. There were no objections.

Summary Notes Approval: No longer a quorum by 11:15AM to approve February's Summary Notes.

Next Meeting: June 25, 2020. Will be done via Zoom.

Councilmember Morell asked if TAC can meet more often to meet deadline. Need time to get requested data. Wouldn't have it in two weeks.

Items needed for next meeting are current/proposed future allocations with 6-year TIP. It was proposed that commission members come to meeting with 3 to 4 alternatives.

Doesn't appear to be enough time to submit a final proposal by July 30. Councilmember Morell doesn't think it would be a problem to extend date. Need to request more time through council. Councilmember Campbell agreed.

Public Comment: None.

Adjourn: 11:25AM; Lindsey Sehmel; 2nd by Jane Moore. No opposition for adjourning.