



King County Transit Advisory Commission

March 17, 2020

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Teleconference: Zoom Meeting

Commission members in attendance: Pete Rubin (chair), Cheryl Harrison, Jacob Struiksmma (vice chair) Lin Robinson, David Johnson, Angela Theriault, Judy Stenberg, Lin Robinson, Aaron Morrow, Ayan Mohamed

King County staff: Michelle Huynh (Metro, Community Relations), Cindy Chen (Metro, Community Relations), DeAnna Martin (Metro, Partnership & Engagement Manager), Sarah Lovell (Metro, Transit-oriented development)

Current TAC chair Pete Rubin opened the meeting.

The group approved the consent agenda which consisted of meeting minutes from February meeting.

Pete led the group in a short ice-breaker exercise to check in with everyone.

Sarah Lovell, Transit Oriented Development Program Manager, gave a short recap of the equitable transit-oriented communities policy that was discussed in the February meeting. She also briefly recounted what the group had discussed in the previous meeting, which was largely a discussion on why density is important when it comes to land use but jurisdictions and communities may have conflicting views. The group also noted the policy should be flexible. Transit has not been something that pays for itself, neither does affordable housing.

Questions and feedback from the group about the policy:

- What is an example of “ensuring related investments provide equitable benefits that serve local, disadvantaged and underrepresented communities?”
 - A: In Los Angeles, they had a ballot measure that generated money to be distributed around LA County on smaller capital projects like first/last mile connections and public improvement projects. Metro does not have a specific source of funding for this, and would partner with other entities.
- Density is very important; it seems we’re missing an opportunity to build higher than 4-6 stories (Redmond TOD). Why is the county not advocating for higher density?
 - A: While density is important, there is often pushback from the jurisdictions as well as the residents. In Issaquah, they will go up to 7 stories in the downtown core; this in turn destroys the nature of where people choose to live. Residents are pushing back because they don’t want huge buildings in their town.



- With very high density buildings, we must also consider the quality of life. Is there sufficient infrastructure to support those big developments, like parks, fire station, police and other things needed to make it a community?
- Is the policy only referring to county-owned property?
 - A: Yes, these are goals that Metro would have for Metro-owned property, the majority of which are park-and-rides, and surface parking. Metro could be using the properties for more than just parking.
- Is the goal for the development on Metro property to generate revenue?
 - A: While generating revenue would be great, Metro is really looking to see how these large pieces of property that are being used for parking can be used to connect housing and transit. From a transit ridership perspective, it is beneficial to activate the property by developing it into a better land use. This would also lead to better climate outcomes.
- Need to have connected spaces. Taller, skinny buildings may be easier to navigate especially with a grid street system.
- Seniors will have different needs and might need housing with one floor.
 - A: The policy will include a mix of different types of housing.

Overall, the group discussed that the density is not necessarily just an issue for jurisdictions – residents and communities may have different opinions about density because of how it may change their neighborhood. There may need to be a broader culture shift to encourage better land use that supports people and transit, while maintaining sensitivity about how people feel about where they live.

TAC members decided to draft a comment letter for the April meeting. Pete will draft the letter and bring it up for approval at the April meeting.

Next steps for the ETOC policy are to incorporate the feedback from TAC and other stakeholders into the draft. The original timeline was to complete that process by the end of March and send it to Council in May. That timeline may be changing due to COVID-19.

Partnerships and Engagement Manager DeAnna Martin gave an update about Metro's response to COVID-19.

Metro has updated its cleaning practices and working to change practices to ensure social distancing in the workplace. Everyone who is able to work from home is now required to work from home.

Questions and comments from the group:



- What is Metro doing to protect operators? Are a lot of operators calling in sick, or has ridership dropped?
- Can people enter through the back door, or can you not collect fares anymore?
 - Metro considering options to board through the rear door and whether to suspend fares.
- How is Metro reducing service if there is a shelter in place/stay home order?
 - Metro is planning for different service reduction scenarios that can still ensure that we keep the network footprint, but not allow for overcrowding.
 - Access is remaining the same, and doing fewer shared rides.
- FTA issued an advisory to suspend fare collection.
- Service should be maintained to grocery stores, pharmacies and other essential places that are remaining open right now.
- How does air circulation (HVAC) affect how the virus travels on a bus?
 - Metro is looking into this. Blog post went up with more information [here](#).
- This has had a big impact on the economy – will the state be putting additional resources into transit?
 - We are working on understanding the financial impact on our revenue. Regional funding is paused for now.
- Are the North Eastside service changes still going into effect?
 - Yes, it will go into effect on the scheduled date of March 21.
- Is bus base expansion still proceeding?
 - Yes, planning for the 2021-2022 biennial budget is happening right now and will include the planning for our long-term vision.
- Any updates about zero emissions buses?
 - The work is ongoing to electrify a few of the bus bases so that we can run more battery electric buses.
- Can Metro install hand sanitizer dispensers on the buses? This would be helpful for those without access to handwashing.
 - Good suggestion, though we may not have the supplies to do this.

DeAnna committed to keeping the TAC informed about Metro's response to COVID-19 and will send more information if transit service is reduced.

TAC member recruitment

Cindy and Michelle led a discussion around TAC member recruitment. The group agreed to recruit about 5-6 new members so that there will be a total of 15 or 16 members on the commission. This would mean that quorum would be 8 members.

Jacob, Cheryl, David, Judy, Christiana and Ayan all have terms that expire in August 2020 and all except Christiana (not present) asked to be reappointed.



The group agreed that Cindy and Michelle should put together the recruitment materials to prepare for recruitment.

At the next meeting, TAC will select a few members to work with Cindy and Michelle to help out with the application review process.

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.