



Project Overview

- 1 The D-to-M Streets Track & Signal Project is a 1.2 mile section of new track to be constructed by Sound Transit on acquired right-of-way connecting Tacoma Dome Station with Sound Transit's Lakeview Subdivision. The rail line will cross a lowered Pacific Avenue on a grade-separated bridge, giving traffic on this major arterial unimpeded access to points north and south of the line.

Meeting Purpose

- 2 Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma gathered the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) for the second of two design charettes to discuss technical issues, design options, construction phasing, and redevelopment as it relates to the D-to-M Streets Track & Signal Project in Tacoma.

Introduction

- 3 Angie Thomson, meeting facilitator, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. She reviewed the agenda and highlighted the three goals of the meeting: to report on and discuss urban design and property development, bridge type, and the E. A Street pedestrian crossing.
- 4 Chris Larson, City of Tacoma Public Works, mentioned that he did not want the PAC meetings to be exclusive and did not intentionally leave any community groups out of the discussion. He noted that this meeting was the second meeting of two, and at the end of the evening there would be a discussion about future meetings.
- 5 Chris called attention to the handout with key discussion points from the PAC's September 11 meeting and noted that Sound Transit took that feedback and has brought back more visuals and information in response to questions raised in that meeting.
- 6 Mark Johnson, Project Lead for Sound Transit, thanked everyone for coming to the first meeting and returning again for the second, and stated his hope to have a consistent group of people working on the project. He noted there will be monthly meetings through the design phase, until July of 2009, and noted the usefulness of to the PAC's input to Sound Transit in their planning process.
- 7 Jim Merritt, Dome District Association, asked to clarify some issues from the meeting notes from September 11. He explained that he had numbered the paragraphs to reference different items. He asked the following to be addressed:

- paragraph 2, clarify “risk analysis”
- paragraph 5, what is the transition from design charettes to monthly meetings?

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- paragraph 2, the six Dome District guiding principles should be added as an attachment
- paragraph 2, the statement regarding “surplus property” is incorrectly stated, it should say surplus property would be sold, not given to the city
- paragraph 2, should say “integrate” the city with the train, not “protect”
- paragraph 6, should not say “given” South C Street will be closed
- paragraph 8, mentions retaining walls but we still question retaining walls
- paragraph 9, do not agree with this sentence

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- paragraph 6, “fundamental issue is the context,” transit oriented development needs to be recognized, not just transportation

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- E. A Street closure, budget, safety, and schedule are big issues

8 David Boe stated that their overriding concern was that because these are public meetings of an advisory committee, that members’ work would “live and die by the meeting minutes.” His concern was that if the minutes are too general and not specific, then the reader may assume that all participants agreed. He recommended that the meetings be recorded and noted that people will reference these notes in the future. He also asked that the minutes be available one week before the next meeting. He noted that an attendee was not acknowledged in the previous meeting notes. Angie Thomson stressed the importance of everyone signing in so this can be avoided in the future.

Urban Design/Property Redevelopment

9 Tom Wilson, Sound Transit design team, presented a 3D model depicting layouts of remnant parcels and the intersection of Pacific Avenue and 26th Street. Actual profiles were added to the model to demonstrate what the roads, embankments, retaining walls, and bridge would actually look like from all angles.

10 The following are comments and questions from the Public Advisory Committee and members of the public present at the meeting. The speaker is indicated in brackets. *Answers are indicated in italics.*

11 [Jori Adkins] Some of the slopes are green, is that going to be turf? *Yes, on slopes it is grass that will be maintained by Sound Transit until the land is sold for redevelopment.*

12 [unknown] The 40 ft buffer is not consistent; Elephant Car Wash does not have this buffer. *You are correct, the rail line comes closer than 40-feet to the car wash. We will protect their property with a retaining wall there.* Is there the same issue at the Armour Building? *Yes.*

- 13 [John Lewis] This is the first I have heard that Delin Street is going to be closed. What are you going to be replacing it with? How are we going to have access to Knob Hill? *This has been planned since the EIS was published in 2002. Delin Street will continue to be accessible by turning off of Pacific Avenue onto 27th Street; it will only be closed between Pacific and 27th.*
- 14 [Jerry Lechner] Does the city plan a traffic light at 27th? I am concerned about people getting in and out. *A traffic study shows that approaching the year 2030 or 2040, it will be hard to turn left onto Pacific Avenue from 27th, and at that point it is recommended that a traffic light be added at 27th and Pacific.*
- 15 [Jori Adkins] We need to make sure there is a pedestrian crossing at this corner, even though the road is closed to cars.
- 16 [Marty Campbell] We are looking at reestablishing historic S. C Street car lines. On Delin Street, if we want to reestablish there, how will this work provide opportunity for us to put our street cars there? *How do you get street cars through that intersection? The City will need to look at that.*
- 17 [Marty Campbell] Is there going to be something in place that if we want to put in a street car, we can do that; or will it require major re-engineering (regarding Delin Street)? *Most likely it will need to be re-engineered if you're envisioning street cars running in a dedicated right of way.*
- 18 [Marty Campbell] Will the street car be able to go under the bridge? Will there be enough width cut? Maybe we should create our standards further back in case we need to expand the road in the future. *Fascinating question, but right now it is outside of the realm of what we can plan for.*
- 19 [Marty Campbell] Will the entrances to the Elephant Car Wash on and off Pacific Avenue still exist? *Yes, all three ways to enter and exit the car wash will still be there.*
- 20 [Jim Merritt] If I am reading this correctly, the issue of not blocking off streets in a greater way is starting to be addressed. However, there are still some retaining walls that may or may not be necessary. There are ways to work with building owners to transition grade so that another big wall does not have to be put in.
- 21 Angie Thomson asked if the model is presenting the worst case scenario in terms of retaining walls and Mark Johnson agreed that it has conservatively shown the required retaining walls.
- 22 [Jim Merritt] The green space (on the model) is the future opportunity for development. The narrowness of the right of way is important so that it really integrates into the street and the train is integrated in the urban center. An 80 ft right

of way is excessive. The retaining wall that parallels the track is a box frame and not truly a retaining wall. Design the retaining walls properly. *We are evaluating all types of walls, and we will consider a right-of-way width less than 80-feet wide for a specific development proposal.*

- 23 [Jori Adkins] In your drawing, how far back are you extending those walls back? To have a development site, we need to go back at least to a parcel. If the wall is only going back 10 ft it is useless, but if it is 75 ft then we can use it. *The developer would need to take these wing walls into account. We are trying to avoid precluding opportunities for development.*
- 24 [Jori Adkins] You are making it very difficult to ever sell that property. If you extend those walls back far enough to build, then you will be able to sell. *Your concern is that you don't want the developer to have to do that? No one is going to want to do that and we will always have green grassy area in an urban situation.*
- 25 [Forrest German] I am having a hard time coming to terms with the bowl effect of Pacific Avenue dipping down. What do we do with that bowl visually, how do we enter the city from a dip? The way it is right now, with the slopes from the sidewalk up, it is reinforcing this bowl effect because you are going down into something. Also, there are a lot of people that walk the streets in this area and extensive fencing has been done to prevent camping. How would your plan accommodate that? If we put vertical walls up, to visually change and break up the bowl, the walls would also keep the homeless off the landscaping. *The cost implication for whoever comes in later to develop that parcel and remove the wall would have to be considered.*
- 26 [Ed Davis] It would be nice to hear from someone from the police department about the area. I had to fight to get people off of my property. Eventually, I fenced it all off and the problem was solved, but now it will be totally exposed and my property is susceptible to vandalism. *We realize there is a security issue; Sound Transit is planning for the security of the remnant parcels after the project is completed.*
- 27 Mark Johnson reiterated this is one of the reasons why these meetings are taking place, to hear about issues that concern people. Sound Transit needs to hear about how the community would like properties to be handled and how the City of Tacoma can work with Sound Transit to address these issues.
- 28 [Jim Merritt] It is important to consider the interim use and how to manage for future potential. I would like to see 3-5 story buildings here some day. *We went ahead and added some buildings to the model to show you what that might look like. (The computer model illustrated development of this scale.)*
- 29 [Whitney Rhodes] Would it be possible for Sound Transit to allow the right of way to be used for urban gardens, or a dog park, or a use that is not buildings? *The number one concern is safety. We have to be certain that people are not easily able to access tracks. Sound Transit would like to partner with the City on a case by case basis and*

if the City would like to purchase land along the right of way for a trail or a park, that would be fine. Sound Transit is a transit agency and is not in the business of operating or maintaining those types of uses, however.

- 30 [Keith Stone] Why is the right of way 80 ft wide? Are you planning three tracks? *The provision is for a maintenance road along the two tracks. There is a drawing in your handouts illustrating the components of the 80-foot width.*
- 31 [Keith Stone] The drawing shows that 55 ft are required and now you have grown to 80 ft? *We are not wedded to 80 ft in every case but as a standard it is a good planning dimension. We won't need more than 80 ft.*
- 32 [Jori Adkins] Are you building a bridge for only one track? *Yes, Sound Transit only needs one track. In the future, if another agency wants to add a second track they could do so and build another bridge. It is unlikely that it would be necessary to tear down the bridge built by this project and start over. Given the funding constraints we are under, it seems wasteful to use taxpayer dollars to build a bridge wide enough for two tracks when we only one is needed for the foreseeable future.*
- 33 [Jori Adkins] I want buildings on Pacific Avenue. All of the sudden we have huge right of way spaces that we can do nothing with. I want buildings and I think that you need to build a double bridge right now. We need to have the buildings built right up to the bridge and not have the maintenance road going across the bridge. *When we scoped the project with Sound Transit, building a double bridge was discussed. There is a dollar value that needs to be addressed. We did a study looking at the differences in two tracks and what we are showing today is the way it stood at the end of that study in 2007.*
- 34 Angie Thomson clarified that the message participants wanted Sound Transit to hear is that they do not like the idea of a buffer, they would like to see a wall or pair of walls supporting the rail line and buildings built right up to it.
- 35 [Jim Merritt] The handout that you gave us shows that you can do the right of way 43 ft wide, half of the proposed 80 ft. The trade-off is the maintenance road. There are other ways to get there besides a maintenance road. That area for the road could be available for buildings. *You would like us to look at options for reducing the right of way width to 43 ft. We're certainly willing to consider a reduction in width in response to a specific proposal to purchase remnant parcels for redevelopment.*
- 36 [Whitney Rhodes] Before the buildings are built, I am concerned that the experience of a pedestrian or bicyclist may feel like a freeway because of the bowl effect. One thing I ask is to push back the edges to allow for options and add a few extra feet. Put some kind of narrow green buffer and then the sidewalk. When redesigning sidewalks, let's allow for various future uses, such as E. A Street car.
- 37 [Forrest German] Are the sidewalks going to be 8 ft or 15 ft?

- 38 [Jim Merritt] That facade under the tunnel does not have to be concrete. It could be artwork or some other kind of façade.
- 39 [Gregg Snyder] Are any of these renderings available? *We can put them up on the website.*
- 40 [Jim Merritt] Air rights have not yet been discussed. *We know there is an interest in air rights. In the absence of a real proposal it is hard to say, but Sound Transit will be working with the City and is willing to discuss the sale or leasing of air rights on a case-by-case basis.*
- 41 [Forest German] What happens if we have a flatter approach to the intersection? We could start dropping the grade at E. A Street and then have it level off for 40 ft. It would be more of a place, rather than feeling like you were falling in to something. *Keith Nakano is our civil engineer and he will explain that next.*
- 42 [Marty Campbell] One thing that is missing is that there is no street parking in front of the potential development you're showing; we need to create on-street parking. I am also concerned about the history and geology of the area. Part of Pacific Avenue used to be a 60 ft gulch that was completely filled in. Sound Transit needs to be aware of geologic history in the area to ensure safety. *You would like to make sure Sound Transit does their homework in terms of geology.*
- 43 Julia Walton, Sound Transit design team, presented bike and pedestrian issues looking at different scales of the area and discussing what changes would result from the project. Her map showed the main flows of pedestrian and bike traffic, as reported by Jori Adkins. The main pedestrian flow, as well as bike flow, is on Puyallup Avenue and 26th Street, as well as D Street and Pacific Avenue. Julia stated that the two changes to the pedestrian network would be the closure of S. C Street to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and a pedestrian crossing at-grade or as an underpass on E. A Street.
- 44 [Whitney Rhodes] People do take their bikes further down Pacific Avenue than the map indicates.
- 45 [Forrest German] The Tacoma Rescue Mission creates a lot of pedestrian traffic. When closing off C and E. A Streets to cars, can people still walk there? *E. A Street will have a pedestrian crossing. S. C Street will be closed to pedestrians and cars for safety reasons.*
- 46 [Jerry Lechner] I would like to advocate the Water Ditch Trail going down to Greyhound square.

- 47 [David Boe] How will this work pedestrian-wise for Dome events? *The same as it does today. The east-west corridor is still available and E. A Street will have a pedestrian crossing.*
- 48 [Jori Adkins] The map that I provided is very Dome District centric and I would like to add some other things to the map. It seems like a lot of bikes on South Tacoma Way don't come all the way down to Pacific Avenue but turn on to S. C Street and head north.
- 49 Chris Larson stated that the Water Ditch Trail is currently under design. The City does not know exactly where it will go down South Tacoma Way. If S. C Street is not an option, other options will need to be developed.
- 50 [Ed Davis] I witness S. C Street all day long and I think closing it is a huge mistake. The notes from last meeting talk about visibility and safety for the S. C Street intersection as reasons for closing it, but what about other intersections? The foot traffic on S. C Street is huge, it feeds the Tacoma Rescue Mission. *Sound Transit has completed a study of train operations on this grade. Engineers have limited visibility of the S. C Street intersection as they descend the grade, and due to the steep grade would need a long distance to stop. For safety reasons, Sound Transit recommends closure.*
- 51 [Whitney Rhodes] If S. C Street is closed, it is the responsibility of Sound Transit to give pedestrians and bicyclists an alternative. As the University of Washington Tacoma and the Brewery District grow, there will be an increased pedestrian population in that area.
- 52 [Keith Stone] Isn't it only a 2.85% grade? It is not a major grade. You are not closing crossings at South Wilkeson Street or 56th Street. This is the main street into the Brewery District and to close a city street is just crazy. Where is the City in this? *The City and Sound Transit are working together on this.*
- 53 Angie Thomson noted that the closure of S. C Street needs to be discussed at a future meeting.
- 54 [Jori Adkins] We need more ideas. Maybe the train should be going slower in an urban situation, and then safety wouldn't be a problem at all.
- 55 [Jim Merritt] S. C Street is a major north-south route. Yakima and Tacoma Avenues are on bridges. We need to accommodate movement in Tacoma and understand the overall movement. The train is how many minutes out of every hour? Not a high percentage.
- 56 Chris Larson noted that there was a comment at the last meeting regarding having a trail across the bridge. He asked if anyone thought this would be beneficial.

- 57 [Jerry Lechner] I like it. The Water Ditch Trail presently goes along the rail.
- 58 Mark Johnson stated that Sound Transit would be happy to work with the City on proposals for a trail and that the rail line and trail would need to be designed in a way that maintains a separation between people and trains.
- 59 Keith Nakano, Sound Transit design team, presented cross sections. He noted that at the last meeting participants asked for more information so Sound Transit brought drawings of different cross sections to illustrate how the rail line relates to existing topographic elevations.
- 60 [David Boe] At the B Street gulley north of the Sound Transit track to 25th Street you are 28 ft in the air down to the toe of the slope and then back up? *Correct*. Then that parking lot goes away? *Correct, some of it becomes unusable*. North of the Sound Transit track would have to become a park or forested area.
- 61 [Keith Stone] The Dome District would like to have an underpass put at the B Street gulley for pedestrian and bike use. It is a future opportunity for a trail.
- 62 [Jori Adkins] That was a single track drawing, if you were to do a double track, how would it deal with the mountain line? *We may have to put a wall in for the relative elevation difference. Here is an example at E. A Street, it shows what is proposed as an undercrossing for pedestrians. Between E. A Street and Pacific Avenue, this shows the single track option, the double track, and they fit in the right of way.*
- 63 [Jim Merritt] So if you were to narrow that right of way there would be a wall not even four feet high? *Correct*.
- 64 [Jerry Lechner] Does Elephant Car Wash know about this? *Yes*.
- 65 [Keith Stone] Elephant Car Wash does not know about this. *Sound Transit has spoken with the owner several times and is working with him as plans develop.*
- 66 [David Boe] Let's assume there was no city here. You would go only two to three feet above the existing Pacific Avenue with rail? *It would be more like six feet. We do not have a cross-section drawing of Pacific Avenue here tonight.*
- 67 [David Boe] Everything we are talking about (bringing a train into an urban city) should be a story above, a story below or at grade so that it is developable. This proposal is half-way. If we really want to do the economical and urban design-friendly way, put in a grade. You would save a lot of money and developable lands would increase. The problem is not this line; the problem is the light rail because it caused so many problems on 25th Street. That one issue is causing so many others.
- 68 [Jim Merritt] We can show the 17 crossings at grade. The idea of safety should not be focused on S. C Street. I don't understand what the problem is either.

69 Angie Thomson stated that the group was not ready to address those comments right now but that they were good comments.

70 [David Boe] Due to other events, this project has been painted into a corner and we are trying to find our way out. We should try to reassess this. *We did a study of what the rail line would be like following this route but crossing Pacific Avenue at -grade. What we discovered was that it could work by building up the grade at Pacific. It ended up saving only about \$5 million dollars in construction cost, and in order to make it work, we would have to lower the grade of rail at Pacific Avenue which created other impacts. Sound Transit briefed the City Council with that information and the Council advocated for a grade-separated crossing of Pacific Avenue. That was included in the project approved by the Sound Transit Board.*

71 [David Boe] I appreciate that, but did those costs take into consideration the real estate value of the two different options? Did it take into account the impact to the area and developability of those areas? You need to look at the whole picture.

72 Angie Thomson stated that Sound Transit was not prepared for this discussion today.

Bridge Type

73 Tom Wilson, Sound Transit design team, presented bridge concepts. He mentioned that nine bridge types were originally reviewed and based on conversations from the last meeting Sound Transit narrowed down the options to: Thru Plate Girder, Tied Arch, A-Frame, and Thru Box Girder. Tom told participants that they could make comments directly on to the sketches, as well as discussing the 3D renderings of the bridges.

74 [Jori Adkins] The Thru Plate Girder and Thru Box Girder look similar, yet one is the cheapest and the other is the most expensive. *Why? It relates to the structure and construction of them, specifically the cost of fabricating the box.*

75 [Jim Merritt] I find it very difficult to say that I am going to choose a bridge. We all have different aesthetic preferences. In order to get consensus we need to find criteria to make a decision. Simplicity? Fit in to urban center? I like all of the bridges for different contexts, depending on the criteria. *Giving us your comments on what kind of criteria will really help us get started.*

76 [Forrest German] If we don't have criteria, we cannot make a decision. Looking at space is important. Do we want an oppressive bridge or one that takes you out and lifts you out of that space?

77 Tom Wilson stated that Sound Transit is trying to gauge from the group their thoughts of aesthetics and gateway potential. These are not the only four options; Sound Transit is just trying to get the group's opinions on different ideas.

- 78 [Keith Stone] What is the depth of the Puyallup Bridge? *It is about the same depth, but this one will be a little longer.*
- 79 Angie Thomson stated that participants seem to be leaning towards simplicity and do not want the bridge to block views of downtown, but instead to have a lower profile.
- 80 [Forrest German] A mirrored surface could be added to the bridge, potentially making an interesting art statement and making the bridge disappear.
- 81 [Jori Adkins] How about a mural that imitates what is behind it?
- 82 [Jim Merritt] Art could be a criterion. For instance, the D Street overpass has nice art. We need to address how it respects and does not compete with the urban edge in the future.
- 83 [Ed Davis] Does it have to be made out of steel or cement? *There are two types of material: reinforced concrete or steel. We are trying to design the best suited, most economical structure.*
- 84 [David Boe] What is missing from these models is the background and the view that the bridge will be obstructing. Any bridge that obstructs the view of old City Hall and the water had better be beautiful.
- 85 Angie Thomson reviewed what participants had mentioned regarding choosing a bridge: the potential obstruction of view, interaction of art, interaction with the urban edge, simplicity, and low profile.
- 86 [Jim Merritt] Maybe create something that goes beyond the edges of the bridge. For example, Sound Transit has a wave. What if the bridge became something that just floated through? It becomes more than a bridge and integrates into the city.
- 87 [Jerry Lechner] The bridge needs to be pedestrian-friendly day and night.
- 88 [Keith Stone] We would like Sound Transit to get this piece of property from Washington State and use it as the parking lot for the Armour Building. Then we can develop the former parking lot. If you divide the Armour Building property with a train, it will devalue their building because they will not have an adjacent parking lot.
- 89 A discussion about subsequent meetings took place and it was decided that the group's next meeting would be on Thursday, October 16th from 4-5:30pm to talk about A and S. C Streets. Monthly meetings will take place on the second Thursday of each month from 4-5:30pm, beginning on November 13th.
- 90 Angie Thomson thanked everyone for coming and asked if there were any additional comments. Jim Merritt asked for a thorough profile along A and S. C Streets and

Forrest German asked for a traffic study and a discussion about what closing S. C Street really means.

Meeting Attendees

Sound Transit Team

Mark Johnson
Melissa Saxe
Roger Iwata
Angie Thomson
Adair Muth
Julia Walton

Jeanine Viscount
Scott Danielson
Keith Nakano
Tom Wilson
Adam Buckmaster
Steve Shanafelt

City of Tacoma Staff

Chris Larson
Donna Slinger
Diane Wiatr

Lihuang Wung
Connie Corpez

PAC Members/Public

Jori Adkins
David Boe
Marty Campbell
Ed Davis
Forrest German
Jerry Lechner

John Lewis
Jim Merritt
Tom O'Connor
Whitney Rhodes
Steve Smith
Keith Stone