

**NOTES**  
**ALLENTOWN COMMUNITY MEETING**  
**May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5:30 pm**  
**Tukwila Community Center**

**Welcome and Introduction from Mark Hafs, EIS Project Director**

- City officials and staff present: Mayor McLeod, Councilmembers McConnell, Sharp, Hendrick, and Pappan, City Administrator Marty Wine, Deputy City Administrator/Parks Director Pete Mayer, Public Works Director Hari Ponnekanti, Emergency Manager Mindi Mattson, Mark Hafs.
- Community Attendance: about 25
- Introduction from Marty Wine, Interim City Administrator
  - o Thanked residents for coming and introduced Councilmembers and Mayor.
- Mark reviewed the meeting agenda, as well as the shared goals and guiding principles.

**Sound Transit Light Rail Station – Brian Macik and Tamar Schuendler, Sound Transit**

- Brian introduced himself as the Project Manager for the Boeing Access Road (BAR) and Graham Link Light Rail extension projects. Tamar is the Community Engagement Specialist for these extensions.
- Brian shared we are very early in the process of designing these stations and aiming for a 2031 opening day.
- Project team for both Graham St and BAR which share construction timelines.
  - o BAR was included in Sound Move plan in 1996, but then was deferred to a future plan.
  - o BAR/Graham Stations included in the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) Ballot Measure which passed in 2016
- Began alternatives analysis in 2024 to select the preferred site for the Sound Transit Board to vote on in October 2024.
- One key difference is the Graham Station will be “at-grade” (ground-level) and the BAR station will be elevated.
- The BAR station will be an elevated station, using some of the existing guideway, with side platforms for boarding the trains.
  - o Station will be in the vicinity of E Marginal Way, BAR, and I-5
  - o There will be a 300-stall parking lot at ground level with elevators/escalators to bring riders up to the platform to board the trains.
  - o There will be pedestrian, vehicle, ride share, and bus transit access to station which may include adding a new signal.
- Currently gathering existing conditions for the site locations to identify a preferred alternative.
  - o Taking all options through a fatal flaw analysis
  - o In Mid-July 2024, there will be both online and in-person open houses to look through the alternatives and share feedback from the public and the City with the project team.
  - o The Sound Transit board will determine preferred design in October 2024 which will kickstart the official design phase.
- Emphasized the importance of community input and invited Tukwila residents to reach out to the project team and attend open houses.

- Reiterated that with any of the options for the BAR station (whether it is on E Marginal Way or BAR), there will be a ground-level parking lot and a raised platform for train access.
- One option is for the station to be on the south side of the BAR, and there will be boarding platforms on both sides of the guideway.
- The team must be cautious of the impacts to the existing train operations in the area when constructing this station. Some considerations include whether construction would shut down freight railroad tracks when working next to/over them for safety - limiting trains to a single track- and/or nighttime closures.
- **Q:** How are you getting around how much excavating you will need when building in this area? We were told the excavation would cost too much to implement the North-side BAR Truck Reroute alternative.
  - o **A:** That is a challenge we will also navigate. The topography on BAR is very challenging to work with. Either site location (BAR or EMW) will be challenging working with the landscape and building the elevated station.
- **Q:** Have you talked to BNSF?
  - o **A:** We have talked to them initially about the project from a high-level but have not requested their input or approval directly.
- **Q:** This butts up the Seattle PD gun range and to the East of the Sounder line is Poverty Hill which is already degrading. This is a complicated area.
  - o **A:** Yes, we are aware of those constraints in this vicinity. Some other complicating factors include South-bound I-5 ramps which are in WSDOT Right of Way, steep grades, and the intersection of mixed transit (train and bus), cars, Uber/Ride Share, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- **Q:** Are you aware of the Allentown truck reroute alternatives that are currently being discussed? Is there an opportunity to share costs if a substantial amount of earth must be moved for both the new ST Station and the Truck Reroute?
  - o **A:** We are not quite far enough along to know at this point to know if there will be an opportunity for shared costs/work, but we will keep that in mind. And yes, we have been briefed on the truck reroute alternatives being proposed. None of those options (Truck Reroute Alternatives) preclude the Light Rail extension from happening. We are in contact with the City and will continue to be as both projects progress.
- **Q:** I have been part of these conversations for years. Accessing the BNSF yard from the North is really my preferred route. I hope you keep the City in mind if there is a way to work collaboratively.
  - o **A:** We will continue to work in partnership with the City.
- **Q:** How far away is your project before you get to design?
  - o **A:** We are on schedule to start conceptual design after the ST Board approves the preferred alternative in October 2024.
- **Q:** The City is talking about possibly adding a road in this vicinity. How closely can Tukwila influence you as far as making it, so this project does not jeopardize potential City-led improvements/reroute options?
  - o **A:** We are here to listen to you as our partner. When they are ready, we would love to sit down with some maps and see the locations of proposed reroutes so we can plan accordingly. We will continue to consider resident/City input into our alternative selection process, as well as working with other partners like WSDOT in case they have plans for the area (i.e. widening the road, adding bike lanes, etc.).
- **Q:** Is ST going to kick funding to help with additional traffic costs?
  - o **A:** We do not know yet what the effects of the station on traffic might be, but we will work to mitigate those concerns as needed.

- **Q:** How much influence does Tukwila have on the planning and design of the station?
  - o **A:** For both the BAR and Graham light rail extensions, we consider both Tukwila and Seattle as partners, so we hope to be coordinating and working with the City throughout the process. We don't want to pick something that the City does not agree with.
- **Q:** When ST 1 came out, one way it was sold to the community was that it is the only place along the route to connect with Sounder commuter rail. Why is this?
  - o **A:** I don't know all the reasons why this site was sold as that, but I can look into it more. My assumption is it has to do with cost and ridership implications, but I don't know.
- **Q:** Will there also be a bus service to the station? What kind? King County Metro?
  - o **A:** We have been and will continue to coordinate with KC Metro as they develop their "Long-Range Connect" planning effort. Through this effort, we will talk about the best way to coordinate bus/train transfers. We are also going to talk to larger employers, discuss ride-share opportunities, Metro Flex, and more.
- **Q:** How many linear feet do you need of straight track for a site to be feasible?
  - o **A:** About 400 ft.
- **Q:** On the track over EMW, how many feet of straight track is there?
  - o **A:** About 1000 ft., but we need to work around East-West electrical lines and steep grades in that area, which makes it more complicated.
- **Q:** Does this have to go through Federal Aviation Association (FAA) because of the proximity to the airport?
  - o **A:** Yes, we will have to work with the FAA.
- **Q:** Are other sites in the City being considered? Like Gateway Drive and Interurban? Seems to be closer to work centers.
  - o **A:** No – we are only looking in this area (BAR/EMW vicinity) based on the language in the ST3 ballot measure. The only way another site would be considered if none of these are options are feasible.
- Please reach out if you want to meet with us and we hope to see you at one of our upcoming open house meetings.

### **Truck Reroute Project Update – Mark Hafs, EIS Project Director**

- We are currently collecting information about existing conditions (like traffic, noise, native habitat, cultural resources).
- Also determining what impacts the project alternatives might have on existing conditions, which will be outlined in the draft EIS.
- We will eventually present this information to the public and City decision-makers (Administration and City Council)
- Review of all alternatives:
  - o 2) Airport Way, 3B) comes in at Gateway Drive with existing roads crosses by the Yellow truck yard with a new bridge across the Duwamish River, 3) Trucks come down from MLK on a new road that is at an 8% grade that meets up with the east end of the S 129<sup>th</sup> St bridge. Trucks will go over the bridge and enter from the South side of the yard. WSDOT realizes that the S 129<sup>th</sup> bridge needs work, so would be an opportunity to rebuild that bridge, too.

**42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge Project Update – Adam Cox, Interim Traffic Engineer; Kash Nikzad, TranTech Engineering; Hari Ponnekanti, Public Works Director/City Engineer**

- Adam is the City’s project manager for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge and Kash is the consulting engineer from TranTech Engineering.
- Adam provided a brief history of the bridge: 1920s - bridge was designed; 1949 - bridge was built; 2017 - weight and speed restricted because the bridge’s age and condition, so the City decided to replace the bridge; 2021 – a consulting engineer provided a type, size, and location (TS&L) study and selected a steel girder design as the best option for a replacement bridge; late 2021 – a high-impact strike by a freight truck reduces the City’s confidence in the bridge’s integrity. Bridge traffic is limited to one-way South-bound.
- Design is currently at the 90% level of completion. TranTech will progress to the 100% design, prepare PS&E (plans, specifications, and estimate) and advertise for a construction contractor in 2026.
- Completion of the bridge design is on hold until the City receives approval - from environmental permitting agencies (WSDOT, Washington Dept of Architecture and Historic Preservation) and tribes that the City is required to consult with - for the bridge design and the measures for mitigating potential effects to historic and natural resources.
- Adam introduced a table comparing the project details with and without a temporary, detour bridge while the permanent bridge is being constructed.
  - o Emphasized the main reason not to build the temporary detour bridge is due to the impacts it would have on a culturally sensitive area. Building the bridge could delay the entire project with regulatory requirements, including extensive cultural resource studies.
  - o Another consideration is making sure that bridge construction can be completed within the “fish window” - the period that the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will allow construction that needs to be done in the Duwamish River. Fish windows typically span only about four weeks in July/August when salmon are least likely to be present in the construction area. The fish window is the only time the construction contractor can perform required in-water work.
  - o Focusing construction resources on a temporary detour bridge would delay demolition of the current bridge and construction of its replacement, running the risk that we would miss the fish window and push back replacement bridge completion for another year.
  - o Lastly, a detour bridge would increase the project costs by \$4-\$6 M.
- As a result of the above-mentioned factors, City staff and our Engineering consultants recommend that we do not construct a temporary detour bridge.
- **Q:** Can you elaborate on the cultural sensitivity aspects?
  - o **A:** Because this project is getting federal funding, as part of the National Preservation Act of 1966, we were required to apply for a 106 Permit. 106 permitting required the City to hire a third-party firm to conduct a cultural resources survey. Through the survey and analysis of collected information, the cultural resource survey team found that a temporary bridge could adversely affect cultural resources.
  - o Although State laws forbid disclosure of the types, locations, and significance of cultural resources that could be affected by construction and operation of a temporary bridge, both the Washington Department of Architecture and Historic preservation (DAHP) and WSDOT have alerted us that building a temporary bridge would likely require substantial additional regulatory review and documentation.

- Because cultural resources that could be adversely affected by a temporary bridge are important to the Duwamish Tribe, the tribe is urging the City not to build a temporary bridge.
- Although the Duwamish Tribe is not federally recognized, and their input is not legally binding, DAHP and WSDOT have advised the City that other tribes, such as the Muckleshoot, would be likely to raise objections similar to those of the Duwamish if the City continues to propose constructing a temporary bridge.
- **Q:** Why don't we at least take a look at putting a temporary bridge on S 124<sup>th</sup> St?
  - **A:** A temporary bridge in this location would result in the same concerns about additional regulatory review, construction delays, and extra costs as a temporary bridge at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S location.
- **Q:** At the City Council meeting why was cost presented as the main reason for not building a temporary bridge, not significance of cultural resources that might be adversely affected?
  - **A:** Although the cost of a temporary bridge factors into the City's decision-making, the primary concern about building a temporary bridge is construction delays related to additional regulatory requirements. Staff should have made this clearer at the Council meeting.
- **Q:** Can you tell us anything about the cultural resources that are being discussed here - how do DAHP and WSDOT decide that a particular artifact (for example, a dinner plate in the project area) is important enough to stop or delay the project? Would we ever find out why the project was stopped?
  - **A:** Because of concerns that cultural resources might be disturbed, we are prohibited by State law from disclosing their location and type. However, we understand the importance of getting information to the public and elected officials and will talk with regulatory agency staff about how to balance protecting cultural resources with keeping the public informed.
- **Q:** How will you know if you find anything when you're drilling and excavating during construction? Is there a set of criteria to say when the project would need to be stopped to protect cultural resources?
  - **A:** It is a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirement that when culturally significant artifacts are discovered, we must immediately inform federally registered tribes in the region (i.e. the Muckleshoot Tribe and the Snoqualmie Tribe, among others) and then the DAHP would be contacted with a request to evaluate the situation and provide direction. We are familiar with several major transpiration projects where construction work was halted after cultural resources were discovered during construction.
- **Q:** Looking at the memo provided in the Council packet, there are two different terms that are being used: "culturally sensitive site" and "sacred site"? These are being used interchangeably. Which definition are we using?
  - **A:** The definition we got from WSDOT says this is a "culturally sensitive site". When we got in contact with the Duwamish Tribe, they said "sacred site". We will check with the permitting agencies to clarify which term is more appropriate for our use.
- **Q:** We know that when they built the TCC, they had to stop work because it was in an area of cultural significance. I don't know how much has changed, but the work then continued once there were steps taken to protect and preserve the land. Same thing happened when Sound Transit came in because they found similar artefacts when digging, but they mitigated the impacts and the construction continued. I want to reaffirm that it is important to respect and preserve.
- **Q:** Are we having a hypothetical conversation, and the decision has already been made [whether or not to construct the temporary detour bridge]?

- **A:** City engineering staff and the project consultant engineers have determined that there is a high risk of proceeding with the temporary detour bridge, and recommend only moving forward with the main, permanent bridge in the location of the existing bridge.
- **Q:** We are talking not just Allentown but the entire City who want to use the TCC. Why don't we open the current 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave Bridge to two-way cars-only traffic, and no trucks, until construction starts? We are looking at five more years of traffic disruptions - can you at least consider it? Not just for Allentown, but for all of Tukwila.
  - **A:** Thank you for the suggestion, the team will look into it. The City has time to plan before the construction including the Codiga bridge and the S 115<sup>th</sup> St intersection, so we will look into all options in the interim.
- **Q:** I think BNSF needs an emergency response plan for when the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge is closed.
  - **A:** We will continue to work with BNSF as best as we can. We will also be in touch with WSDOT regarding the S 129<sup>th</sup> Bridge.
- **Q:** When we don't have a 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge at all (during construction) we will only be able to enter/exit Allentown via the S 115<sup>th</sup> St and the S 129<sup>th</sup> St bridges. Can we get some type of traffic signal at S 115<sup>th</sup> St and East Marginal Way?
  - **A:** We have done a signal warrant study (review of state and federal requirements and guidelines) at 115<sup>th</sup> and EMW in the past but we have not found traffic volumes great enough to warrant a signal. We expect that with the additional traffic we expect on S 115<sup>th</sup> St during construction, a signal may be warranted. If so, the signal would be permanent, staying in place even after the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge is replaced. It will be a standard 3-way traffic signal, (Red, Yellow, Green lights) to control traffic.
- **Q:** In the meantime, the signage is poor - all it says is "road closed" and people don't know where to go. The sign says no trucks except local deliveries, and they are "delivering locally to the BNSF yard". Maybe we can do more to limit this from happening. I recommend more defined signage.
  - **A:** We will look further at additional and different types of detour signage.
- **Q:** About the proposed temporary detour bridge on S 124<sup>th</sup> St - we don't want anything like that. If the 124<sup>th</sup> bridge went in, it would stay, that's what the City wanted all along.
  - **A:** A temporary bridge over 124<sup>th</sup> is not up for discussion.
- **Q:** Who will make the decision regarding the temporary bridge? Or is the one person who is making that call?
  - **A:** The engineering team has provided strong evidence to the Administration that a temporary bridge should not be included in the project, and the Mayor will make the final call. The Council will be decisionmakers about awarding the contract.
- **Q:** Has BNSF been briefed?
  - **A:** Yes, and we will continue to coordinate with them as the project progresses.
- **Q:** Do we have some type of roadmap of where we are? A visual would be helpful.
  - We are at 90% design right now.
  - In 2026, the construction-ready ready bid documents will be complete. We will advertise and select a contractor in 2026 and begin breaking ground in 2027. The timelines are also based on in-water work windows. So, we are looking at 5 more years from today before the new bridge is fully operational (in 2029).

- The team confirmed that proceeding with only the permanent bridge in the same footprint it is in now means that the current bridge will be operational (to some extent) until construction begins in 2027, which is when it will be cut off to traffic completely. The construction will take 12-17 months.
  - o As a reminder, the fish window is only 4 weeks. The team has seen the permit agencies grant case-by-case extensions, but it is still a short window.
- **Q:** If they don't allow an extension, will the contractor have to come back the next year for the fish window, is there a chance the contractor doesn't come back the next year?
  - o **A:** Yes, if the work gets pushed out due to missing the fish windows the contractor would come back the following year. Our contract will outline City/Contract expectations.
- **Q:** how did the I-5 bridge over the Skagit get replaced so fast?
  - Different circumstances. Do not know all the details, although the bridge being on an interstate freeway brought some urgency. Also, only one section of the I-5 bridge was damaged by a truck hitting it, making repair much simpler and quicker.
- **Q:** What happens if the S 129<sup>th</sup> St bridge is compromised while the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S Bridge is out of commission?
  - o **A:** This is something we have been thinking about, too. The City Emergency Management is also involved in these discussions. The City will continue to work with WSDOT and develop alternatives in the event the S 129th St Bridge is compromised.
- **Q:** I know it is hard for emergency preparedness to focus on one neighborhood, but maybe they could prepare a list of resources available to the residents in the event something happens?
  - o **A:** We are coordinating with Emergency Management, the Tukwila Police Department, and Puget Sound Fire to come back in June with more information about this topic.
- **Q:** We used to cut through Foster Point, before the Ecology blocks were installed to restrict through traffic. Could we remove those blocks to provide another way in/out of Allentown?
  - o **A:** This is something the City will look into.
- **Q:** Does the cost range take into consideration the cost of the reduced timeline and the elimination of the bridge? Both for construction expenses and labor?
  - o **A:** Yes. The cost of the temporary detour bridge itself in today's dollars is about \$4 million. This is expected to increase at an average of 5% per year for inflation and material costs.
- **Q:** Will restoration of pedestrian access across the bridge follow the same timeline as for vehicle access?
  - o **A:** Yes.
- **Q:** Grants cover \$31.5 million; will the City cover the rest?
  - o **A:** The city is talking to the granting agencies about potential cost increases due to permitting delays, inflation and the rising costs of materials. We are hopeful that this will be an option, given the fact that the agencies have already extended our obligation timelines due to delays beyond our control.
  - o We have enough funding to complete the design, but there is a small gap in construction funding. We are planning on going back to the granting agencies.
  - o Also, the project costs were initially estimated in 2019 dollars, but now we need to estimate in 2027 dollars.
- **Pete provided a recap of follow up items for the next meeting**

## Traffic Calming – Mark Hafs, EIS Project Director

- **Q:** Why can't have the traffic cushions on 50<sup>th</sup> PI or 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S?
  - o **A:** There are certain road classifications and regulations that prohibit speed cushions on roads with freight traffic. However, we can look into whether those regulations apply, especially on 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S, north of S 124<sup>th</sup> St.
- Community members emphasized that trucks are not *supposed* to be on 42<sup>nd</sup> St, south of S 124<sup>th</sup> St.
- Hopefully, when we come to a good conclusion with the truck reroute, there may be new, creative ways to address general traffic in the neighborhood that are not available while freight truck traffic is using Allentown's streets.
- City staff can look more closely at road classification on roads like S 124<sup>th</sup> St, among others, to determine if there are options to add speed cushions.
- **Q:** We all agree that freight truck traffic should not be on 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S. What can we do to calm traffic in the short term?
  - o Public Works will continue to look into ways to calm traffic in the neighborhood.
- Community members shared that there is significant speeding in the neighborhood which makes people afraid to walk around. There is also only intermittent Police enforcement of speeding in the area.
- **Q:** In past meetings, the City mentioned adding traffic cameras to Codiga Park.
  - o **A:** PD is working with a consultant on this project to install cameras. There was some conversation about adding one in front of TCC, but we don't know if we can do that at this point. That might require rewriting City code and Council approval. We will coordinate with PD to get more information.
- Community members shared that over the past 2 years, they have only seen a PD officer enforcing speed once and explained that a PD officer is not authorized to pull over a semi-truck for speeding. Others shared their frustration and said that it seems like no one is going to take action until something catastrophic happens.
- **Q:** What are we doing to make residents feel safer in Allentown/walking dogs/accessing TCC? How can we mitigate the effects to make people feel safe?
  - o **A:** The City will continue to look into adding a signal to help with the congestion at S 115<sup>th</sup>/EMW. We can also look more closely at the S 124<sup>th</sup>/50<sup>th</sup> PI intersection to make it more user-friendly. The City also has plans to improve 50<sup>th</sup> PI as part of this year's Annual Overlay program.
  - o The traffic calming budget will be included in the Capital Improvement Program budget presented to the Council.
  - o Recently, a traffic study was conducted which proposed reducing some speed limits, among other traffic calming strategies. We will consider each of these options.
- **Q:** I remember the study, but I don't recall seeing that traffic cushions could not be used on roads where trucks are regularly present. When that study was done, it seemed that there was little attention paid to the low-cost options of adding in speed cushions in our neighborhood. What was done [S 119<sup>th</sup> St raised crosswalk] has not been effective at changing the course of traffic/controlling speed, I think the traffic has increased on 42<sup>nd</sup>.
  - o **A:** We will look into potential strategies to help with the traffic in Allentown.
  - o We also want to reiterate that the annual traffic-calming budget needs to stretch over the entire City.

## Miscellaneous



- **Q:** I was told that there was a conversation about King County using 65+ acres of City property - North of Boeing Access Road - to house RVs from across the County.
  - o **A:** There was a conversation about this but there are many reasons why it is not feasible and will not work. This is not something we are authorizing.
- **Q:** Noted in Council report is that there is a gas/electrical line crossing the Duwamish River on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave S bridge. When the bridge gets shut down, how will this be handled?
  - o We expect the utilities will be carried across on a temporary work platform that the bridge constructions contractors will use, but we will address utility relocation when we get closer to construction – as part of construction planning.

**Follow-Up Items for the City:**

- Emergency/contingency plans – WSDOT, BNSF, Alternate ingress/egress to Allentown.
- Emergency resources list.
- Revisit the two-way bridge traffic of the existing bridge.
- Explore improved road detour signage.
- Project timeline/critical path based on latest assumptions.
- More details regarding the 115th/EMW traffic signal.

**Next Meeting: June 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at the Tukwila Community Center.**