

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY

OBSERVER PROGRAM REPORT

City Council Study Session- 12-15-2020

Members Present: Beale, Walker, Blocker, Hunter, Hines, Thoms, Ushka, Woodard

Members Absent: McCarthy

Observer: Ann Williams

Today's report reviews two agenda items: the first, the Metropolitan Development Council (MDC) seeking Council support for a letter to Governor Inslee regarding the eviction moratorium; and the second, an update on the Bus Rapid Transit Project.

Noting that in a recent survey 145,000 Washington households were not confident about the ability to pay upcoming rent or mortgage, the MDC recently convened meetings of stakeholders affected by the approaching expiration of the eviction moratorium. Stakeholders included people who are threatened with either eviction or foreclosure as well as providers of rental property. One of the results of MDC's advocacy is a letter to Governor Inslee asking that he extend the moratorium on evictions and that he specifically address the needs of the rental property provider community as well, that is negatively affected by the moratorium. Mayor Woodard noted that earlier this fall the Council sent its own letter to the Governor on this subject, but she is happy to join MDC's effort. Members present voted unanimously in support of signing the letter. Member Beale noted that he attended one of MDC's meetings and found that the depth of participation of all stakeholders was impressive.

Pierce Transit representatives presented an update on the Bus Rapid Transit Project, noting that the project is nearing 60% of design completion. The BRT will run on the current Route 1, on Pacific Avenue from downtown Tacoma to Spanaway through six previously identified Opportunity Zones. It is expected to run on 10-minute intervals during peak hours, with rapid boarding, as fares will be processed before bus entry. In 2019, pre-COVID, this route, the most utilized in the system, served 3400 passengers/day. The new service will be named "Stream". Currently they are exploring route and station sponsorship for local organizations and businesses.

Full stations will be 60 feet long and have an awning. Not all stops will be this large, after receiving community input, especially in residential areas. There was disappointment expressed by two Council members about the station design, specifically that it is reminiscent of a Howard Johnson's facade, and not fitting aesthetically into all communities. Asked if this design is set in stone, council was told that the design is now board approved, so it would take a lot to change it. You can see a short video here to get a glimpse of the station design as well as other project features. (<https://www.piercetransit.org/brt/>).

The total cost of the project is \$170 million. All but \$70 million has been secured. They hope to get the balance from the Federal Transit Authority. Construction starts in 2022 and completion is expected in 2024.

The BRT presentation also included information on the newly developing ORCA for Multifamily program. This is modelled on the ORCA for Business program and will allow multifamily property owners to offer subsidized ORCA cards to tenants in exchange for decreased parking requirements for the property. This will apply to both affordable and market rate properties.