

Tacoma Theater District Placemaking Plan

Stakeholder Workshop #2

Summary 9/12/2017



Meeting Details

Stakeholder Workshop #2

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts, Studio 3

August 15, 2017

11:30 – 1:30 pm

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this Stakeholder Workshop—the second of three planned workshops—was to share with stakeholders and solicit their feedback on a preliminary District Vision, a list of Defining Characteristics of the District in a future state, and a list of long-term Strategies for achieving this Vision. The Consultant Team presented these draft materials to the group and planned to collect feedback through sticky note exercises and small, facilitator-led group discussions. The results of this process would be incorporated into the final District Vision and inform the Public Realm Framework Plan.

Attendees

Stakeholder Group (26)

Arts & Culture Coalition of Pierce County – Courtenay Chamberlin

Broadway Center for Performing Arts – Leilani Balais

The Broadway Farmers Market – Stacy Carkonen

City of Tacoma – Josh Diekman, Meredith Soniat

Downtown Merchants Group – Steph Farber, Phyllis Harrison

Downtown On the Go – Kristina Walker

The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation –
Anastacia Lamb

Move to Tacoma – Marguerite Giguere

Pierce Transit – Alexandra Mather, Larry McCarty,
Dixie Sciacqua

Pierce Transit Community Transportation Advisory
Group – Chris Karnes

Puget Sound Revels – Mary Lynn

Sound Transit – Sue Comis, Rebecca Japhet

Spaceworks Tacoma – Ricky German,
Heather Joy, Dimitry Mikheyev

Symphony Tacoma – Andy Buelow

Tacoma Housing Authority – Kathy McCormick

Tacoma Parks – Matthew Keough

Theater District Resident - Blaine Johnson

Travel Tacoma – Bennish Brown

The Warehouse/First Night – Adam Ydstie

Project Partners

City of Tacoma – Elly Walkowiak

Pierce Transit – Janine Robinson, Jay Peterson, Dan Pike

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts – David Fischer

Citizen/Pierce Transit Community Transportation Advisory
Group – Sandy Paul

Consultant Team

ORA Architecture – Owen Richards

Walker Macy – Calder Gillin, Mark Hinshaw, Saumya Kini,
Lara Rose

3 Square Blocks – Rebecca Fornaby, Marcia Wagoner



Participant Comments

Presentation Questions & Large Group Discussion

After the Consultant Team presented drafts of a Vision Statement, Characteristics, and Strategies, Heather Joy of Spaceworks shared an update on the project's Outreach and Activation component. Stakeholders used the Q&A period to ask questions and voice concerns about the project's public process to date. The Q&A period evolved into a full group discussion that replaced the sticky note activities planned in the agenda. Due to the importance of the topics being discussed, the Project Partners and Consultant Team restructured the Workshop to accommodate further discussion. As a result, no input was collected on the Consultant Team's presentation through the planned sticky note activities and small group discussions. Highlights from the group conversation that did occur are as follows:

Key Discussion Topics

- The Consultant Team's presentation did not provide sufficient background for those of us attending a workshop for the first time. How is this project being funded?
 - Response: *A year and a half ago Pierce Transit partnered with City of Tacoma and Broadway Center for the Performing Arts to put together a grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts for their Our Town program, which focuses on placemaking (a term that encompasses myriad ways to create places people want to be). The Project Team was successful in acquiring some funding from that program. Pierce Transit provided additional funding due to the high value the organization places on the safety and comfort of its transit riders.*
- Which transit riders does Pierce Transit believe feel unsafe? Visiting riders or local riders?
 - Response: *Pierce Transit is concerned with the safety of anyone who rides transit. By improving the Theater District and transit riders' experience, it is their goal to make riding transit more attractive to more individuals.*
- Lack of diversity in the stakeholder group and Consultant Team
- Lack of diversity represented in the Consultant Team's presentation; failure to accurately depict existing culture in the Theater District
- Project Team's perceived lack of awareness that the current public process is inherently non-inclusive
- Concern that project will cause gentrification that is not supportive of the District's existing community

In response to these concerns, Janine Robinson highlighted Heather Joy's work and Spaceworks' "Outreach and Activation" portion of the project, which is intended to collect feedback from a broader range of community members than are represented in the stakeholder group. Janine pointed out that because this process is being carried out separately from the Stakeholder Workshops, its importance may not have been accurately conveyed.

Stakeholder Suggestions

- Put the project on hold until the stakeholder group reflects the community, which is 35% people of color
- Build on existing culture, business, institutions, and community in the Theater District—actively seek these individuals and groups out
- Invite individual stakeholders to reach out to their own networks to bring more diversity to the stakeholder group
- Bring additional leadership to the process with the skills to facilitate the “difficult conversations” required to move forward
- Bring people of color into the process in a leadership capacity
- Consider prioritizing an inclusive outreach process over completing the project
- Use this effort to create jobs for locals
- Conduct outreach at the Broadway Farmers Market
- Commit to the project’s values, *i.e.* If “inclusion” is a core value, commit to doing the work necessary to make this a truly inclusive process
- Consider the different needs of different groups when planning ground floor uses, *i.e.* families with children may not want many bars and restaurants in their neighborhood
- “Ask—don’t tell—how people want to be represented”
- Meet people where they live and work to have conversations about what they want to see in their neighborhood

Breakout Group Discussions & Report-out

After the full group discussion that followed the presentation, the Project Team, Consultant Team, and Stakeholder Group collectively decided to break into small groups to brainstorm strategies and resources for expanding diversity and inclusivity in the project’s public process. Each of the five groups worked with a facilitator and scribe. At the end of the discussion, a spokesperson for each group shared key points from their group’s conversation with the larger group. Highlights from these conversations are as follows:

Suggested outreach methods and strategies

- Hold outreach events on weeknights and weekends to accommodate work schedules
- Avoid tabling at events—rely instead on more casual conversation
- Use playful, accessible engagement techniques
- Use multiple modes of communication—seniors and low-income individuals may not have access to email
- Include open-ended questions in surveys to generate more buy-in from respondents
- Facilitate conversations between community members who have differing priorities, *e.g.* individuals with children, individuals with disabilities, etc.

TABLE 4
SAUMYA

- Demography
What would "representation" look like
↳ challenge of what that "looks like"

- o Need to know where people are coming from
- o How info. "naturally" gets communicated - self selects
- o Arts/culture/performance is not the "community"
 - ↳ who uses downtown, other groups?
 - ↳ language.
 - ↳ need community organizers
- o Bring in a highly local perspective/ leadership voice - & keep focus on ARTS, performance.
- o INTENT = "community, everyone"
EFFECT = echo chamber

TABLE 1
MARK LARA

IDEAS

online "tod" w/ feedback you can view
feet on street / face to face
is the Library involved?
neighborhood + big district engagement
Churches / Faith groups
↳ OUR NEIGHBORHOOD AS WELL AS CITY CENTER
"existing community recreating for the future"
TALK ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD SEP. IN WEB IF PROMOTING IT PRIOR TO NXT. MTE.

Town Hall
Arts Month Kickoff Party
"Dinner Party"

TABLE 2
OWEN

NEXT STEPS ?

- conversations
- this unique place
- facilitation
- funding for an inclusive process
- Farmers Market - surveys, conversations
 - ↳ get contact info, schedule meetings
 - ↳ when to engage? after market? food + drink? go indoors - Partages?
- Multiple meetings to accommodate schedules
- Be clear about time commitment
- Working groups in different locations
- **Has the plan already been made?**
- ↳ presentation of info can be a barrier to inclusivity

TABLE 3
MARK

NEXT STEPS

1. Reach out to Hilltop artists
2. Outreach must be community-wide, if this is to be the town center.
3. If its for "everyone," find ways to reach out to many different types of people.: people of color, older people, handicapped, youth
4. Use local events in the neighborhood to communicate, contact, converse
5. Reach out to transit users
6. Need to craft a clear message
7. Pause to include more people to craft the message

Potential resources

- Diane Powers, Northwest Leadership Foundation
- Individuals who worked on Tacoma’s Vision 2025
- Pierce Transit’s “transitional duty” employees, who may be available to ride buses, visit events, and contribute to outreach efforts by meeting community members in their daily routines

Potential groups for additional outreach

- Hilltop neighborhood residents
- The Black Collective
- Puyallup Tribe
- Hotel Olympus Apartments residents
- Broadway Farmers Market shoppers and vendors
- Harbor View Manor residents
- Existing stakeholders’ professional contacts

Other suggestions

- Build on existing culture, businesses, institutions, and residents that make the Theater District unique—transform the Theater District “from the inside out”
- Craft clear messaging before moving forward with additional outreach
- Consider shifting to a process-oriented (rather than goal-oriented) approach that will accommodate a slower, more thoughtful outreach process

Questions

- Should outreach target the Theater District community or all of Downtown Tacoma?
- How can lessons learned during this outreach process be shared and passed on?
- Can funding be shifted to bring in leadership with experience leading the “difficult conversations” required for an inclusive outreach process?

Next Steps

Based on the discussion at Stakeholder Workshop #2, the Project Team has decided to slow down the project schedule. The Consultant Team is holding on further development of the District Vision and Framework Plan while Outreach and Activation activities—which aim to solicit input from a wider and more diverse cross-section of the community—take place in early fall. Input gathered through these activities and an online survey will be used to inform next steps in the planning and public outreach processes.