

PORT OF TACOMA COMMISSION
STAFF BRIEFING MEMO



Item No: 10B
Meeting Date: 6/20/2023

DATE: 6/12/2023
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director

Sponsor: Eric Johnson, Executive Director

Project Managers:
Gloria Fletcher, Sr. Mgr., Real Estate and Econ. Development
Matthew Mauer, Manager, Government Affairs,
Jason Jordan, Director of Environmental & Planning Services

SUBJECT: Street Vacation Planning

A. BRIEFING REQUESTED

The purpose of this briefing is to inform the commissioners of the short, medium, and long-term plan for the Port of Tacoma to request street vacations from the City of Tacoma.

B. SYNOPSIS

The street vacation strategy supports the Port of Tacoma's strategic goal EV-1 in that the Port will strategically acquire and develop real estate to support maritime trade activity as well as addressing the system management needs of Port-related businesses in the Tideflats and Pierce County in support of TA-2.

C. BACKGROUND

The public streets in the tide flats area of Tacoma are subject to Tacoma public right of way (ROW) regulations. If an entity owns property abutting a public street, the property owner may petition the City to 'vacate' the right of way – resulting in the transfer of ownership from the city to the property owner. (Reference [TMC 9.22](#)) If there are multiple property owners, each property owner is able to petition to vacate the right of way in front of their property up to the centerline of the street.

During the adoption of the Port of Tacoma Bridge and Road priorities in 2022, the Commission asked staff to develop an analysis of planned and proposed projects as they relate to the potential vacation of public rights-of-way. This analysis included a review of existing agreements with the City of Tacoma and payments made in exchange for future rights to vacate public ROW.

An additional factor that contributed to this work was the recent demolition of the 11th Street viaduct previously located between Stewart Street and Milwaukee Way. This right of way under the former viaduct is utilized in support of NWSA operations at the West Sitcum Terminal, which now requires an exclusive Right of Way Occupancy Permit with the City of Tacoma. This particular permit comes with an anticipated \$310,000 annual permit fee which would no longer be required if a street vacation was approved.

The scope of work to this point has included:

- Completion of a traffic study to understand current and future traffic impacts within the tide flats area.
- Review of prior applications to the City of Tacoma for street vacations.
- Review of existing Interlocal Agreements between the City of Tacoma and the Port of Tacoma.
- Staff analysis of the aforementioned items to create a proposed strategy and sequence for street vacations.

D. SCOPE OF WORK

Staff recommends that the Port move forward with the street vacations as shown below and on the attached map.

Street Location	Timeframe
1. Milwaukee Way - East 11th to Lincoln	Immediate. City initiated per Interlocal Agreement, complete per City timeline
2. East 11th - Stewart to Milwaukee Way and Thorne Road	Initiate 2023 / Complete per City timeline.
3. East 11th - Thorne to Port of Tacoma Road	Initiate by 2025
4. Port of Tacoma Road - Ross to East 11th	Initiate by 2025, subject to property ownership
5. Alexander Ave on Pierce County Terminal (PCT)	Already initiated, revisit in 2024 for next steps
6. Ross -Thorne to Port of Tacoma Road	Revisit in 2025 for timeframe
7. Maxwell – Thorne Rd to Port of Tacoma Rd	Revisit in 2025 for timeframe

Going forward we will incorporate any feedback from the Port of Tacoma Commissioners into the final plan, and subsequently request Commission approval for each street vacation petition pursuant to that plan. Please note that the identified timeframe is subject to revision depending on Commission guidance and changing circumstances.

E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

There is no financial impact at this time as this is an issue briefing. There will be costs associated with future vacation actions. It should be noted however that there is currently a nearly \$8 million credit at the City of Tacoma to be used for these ROW acquisitions.

F. ECONOMIC INVESTMENT/JOB CREATION

The addition of these ROW areas to Port of Tacoma's existing real estate will maximize the utility of the property in support of NWSA and other Port operations for the long term. Economic impacts associated with each vacation will be identified at the time of Commission consideration.

G. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS / REVIEW

There are no environmental impacts currently.

H. NEXT STEPS

Upon incorporating feedback from the Port of Tacoma Commission, Port staff will finalize the street vacation plan, brief counterparts at the City of Tacoma and begin implementing the short-term action items as follows:

1. Complete the Milwaukee Way vacation process.
2. Initiate the 11th Street vacation from Stewart Street to Milwaukee Way