

53rd Ave S. – Re-route

Public Safety Initiative

Situation: 53rd Ave S is of narrow width – 18' at it's narrowest. This existing two-way street has no sidewalk at its narrowest point. Pedestrians are at risk.

Target: Provide for pedestrian safety with minimal infrastructure cost.

Proposal: Make 53rd Ave S a Southbound one-way street and provide bicycle/pedestrian lane



How:

- Sign 53rd Ave S. with “One-Way” signs going Southbound. ¹
- Sign the Southend of 53rd Ave S. with ‘Do Not Enter’ signs. ²
- Retain 52nd PL S. as one-way Northbound. ³
- Place Speed Cushions on northend of 52nd PL S and 2/3rds way further down the street. ⁴
- Remove Westbound STOP sign on S. 137th ST at Intersection of 52nd AVE S to allow free turn onto 52nd AVE S. ⁵
- Place STOP Sign on 52nd AVE S. at intersection with S. 137th ST enabling for the free right-hand and left-hand turn off S. 137th ST. ⁶



From: Cynthia Delostrinos Johnson
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2020 5:58 PM
To: Laurel Humphrey
Subject: Fwd: 53rd Street (north of 137th) road project.

Hi Laurel- when we talk about the 53rd st project at TIC can we include this email as well as any emails we've received recently both in support and against?

Thanks!

Cynthia Delostrinos Johnson
Tukwila City Council
Email: C.DelostrinosJohnson@TukwilaWa.gov
Phone: [206-595-5469](tel:206-595-5469)



TUKWILA - *The City of Opportunity, the Community of Choice*

***My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56 ***

Begin forwarded message:

From: Scott Malone <scottzeppelin@gmail.com>
Date: September 11, 2020 at 2:40:21 PM PDT
To: Cynthia Delostrinos Johnson <C.DelostrinosJohnson@TukwilaWA.gov>
Subject: **53rd Street (north of 137th) road project.**

Hi Cynthia,

I have been informed that you had received e-mails that oppose the work that is to be done on 53rd Street (north of 137th Ave south). This stretch of road is the main pedestrian access for hundreds of people that live in our neighborhood to reach the Metro bus stops on Interurban Ave. The Terrace Apartments, some Foster Green Residents and all of the homes in that area use that stretch of road to walk to and from the bus stops. The road from between 137th Ave So and 136th Ave So has no sidewalk and is too narrow for two cars and a pedestrian to use simultaneously. I believe it is under 18 feet across at 136th Ave So between two telephone poles. Last year I expressed my concern to Mayor Ekberg, Kate Kruller and Thomas McLeod on various occasions. This roadway is not currently safe for pedestrian traffic as it is. The answer is limiting vehicle traffic to one way and installing a sidewalk. There are people with strollers and at least one lady in a wheelchair that use this road daily. In my opinion this is currently the most dangerous stretch of road in Tukwila and is within your scope to resolve it.

Please continue to move forward in this project and let me go on record as 100% in favor of this vital Public Safety action.

Thank you,
Scott Malone

13720 56th Ave So

Tukwila, Wa

(206)276-1550

Sent from my iPhone

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Tukwila network. Please DO NOT open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.

From: Emily Sarah Gendler Zisette <ezisette@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 5:45 AM
To: CityCouncil
Subject: 53rd Ave S

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Morning,

I've written you so many times about this issue over the years and don't even believe I've gotten a response. I don't have time to explain the issue again this morning, but you need to continue to be alerted to the dangers of this issue.

Since my last email to you about this I have again had many conversations with pedestrians expressing how dangerous it is to walk and how many times they have almost been hit by a car, especially for disabled people. I mentioned how I continue to contact the city council, and I encourage these people to contact you as well. I thought maybe you should also know every single person I talk to has no faith in you. They say you won't listen to them, that there is no point in saying anything. I still encourage them to contact you, but I definitely understand and can't deny their feelings, considering that has been my experience. I have been communicating this issue for *years*, as have my neighbors. One of my neighbors found documents her parents sent to the city about the safety of this street *dating back to the 1970s*.

I find it even more ridiculous, and even enraging, that as I homeowner I have to pay outrageous permitting fees and adhere to some of the strictest codes in the county (Tukwila is famous for it's permitting dysfunction and bureaucracy by the way) and yet you as a city don't hold yourself even close to a similar standard for what you expect of your residents. I feel like we should issue you a code violation for not maintaining a safe street and sidewalk. Same goes for the excuses you make about covid and the budget...we are still required to pay our rent, mortgage and bills. We have to figure it out, so do you.

I have an elderly friend who needs a place was going to move in with me, but until the sidewalk is completed it is not safe for him to stay here. He does not drive and uses a cane and it is not safe for him to walk up and down 53rd, which he would need to in order to get to the bus, which he uses for transportation.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Tukwila network. Please **DO NOT** open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.

From: James Felker <jafelker9@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 11:57 PM
To: CityCouncil
Subject: STOPPING UNWARRANTED/UNAPPROVED CHANGES TO 53RD AVENUE SOUTH ROADWAY

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I am writing this letter in an appeal to you in the City Council, to terminate this expensive project concocted to wastefully spend urgently needed taxpayer dollars, especially in this medical & economic crisis situation. I received a postcard notification of this "safety project" over the weekend, and have only had a few days to research what I can do to prevent this mistake from happening. The city's Public Works Department has overstepped its authority by not following procedures documented in the city's Resolution 1955, and by not getting approval from the area residents affected by these rash, unthought out actions. I live in the neighborhood, walk, ride, and drive these streets without problems, and have done so for over 40 years. My neighbors and I have the experience and knowledge of the area that no one in the Public Works Department can equal, but there has been no invitation by the Interim Director or the Public Works office to discuss or debate any safety issues & actions to be taken, if needed. Why this has been sprung on us without our input is beyond comprehension, but it makes me extremely angry that we haven't been included in the planning or evaluation of this "safety plan"! Without warning, Interim Public Works Director Ponnekanti is trying to illegally railroad this project through, before anyone has time to stop it. This current plan will cause multiple traffic choke points and bottlenecks, block emergency responders & service and delivery vehicles, and create accidents. [City of Tukwila Resolution 1955](#) mandates that multiple *evaluations, studies and analysis must be performed, and criteria met before even Level I treatments can be implemented*. In my email conversation with Traffic Engineering Project Manager Scott Bates, he did not provide me with ANY evaluation or studies reporting or conclusions. Either he was withholding information, or the Public Works Department did not actually do any preliminary investigating and evaluations, thereby voiding this entire project. He only sent a memo of a proposal, by engineering firm KPG Interdisciplinary Design, which should never have been contacted about the project until it was approved for go-ahead by my fellow neighborhood residents and myself! Community support is vital to the project (with a 2/3 supermajority required), as well as requiring approval from the city police & fire departments and City Council. Without this information, Level II treatments, such as the actions now being proposed by the Public Works Dept., should NOT be in the planning stages, let alone ready for implementation in the next week!

There are many problems with their "improvement" plan, such as:

- Bottlenecking traffic on 52nd Ave. due to parked vehicles on both sides of the road, leaving only one lane of traffic getting through
- Traffic volume leading to choke points at intersections of 52nd Ave. & 52nd Pl., 52nd Pl. & S. 137th St., and S. 137th St. & 53rd Ave.
- 52nd Pl. too narrow to allow large vehicles (Fire & EMT responders, service vehicles, delivery trucks, etc.) from 52nd Ave.
- 52nd Pl. also too narrow to safely accommodate traffic + a pedestrian walkway
- 52nd Pl. between S. 137th St. & 52nd Ave. roadway not long enough to need ANY speed bumps

Winter problems (FROST/ICE/SNOW from Nov-April) include:

- Cars forced down 53rd Ave. sliding, causing accidents incurring possible injury, deaths, & lawsuits
- Cars forced to use S. 137th as alternate route sliding off road into yard/house, causing accidents incurring possible injury, deaths, & lawsuits
- Ice/frost/snow on 52nd Pl. causing cars to slide backward, causing accidents incurring possible injury, deaths, & lawsuits

- 53rd Ave. being closed due to weather **traps** residents on 53rd Ave., S. 136th St., and 54th Ave. S., OR **criminalizes** them if they drive to S. 137th St.
- 53rd Ave. being closed due to weather **criminalizes** drivers that must use 52nd Pl. to safely navigate to Interurban
- Cost to de-ice added roads (S. 137th St., 52nd Pl., and 52nd Ave.), as well as 53rd Ave., daily from Nov-April

*** In the winter months, ice, frost, and snow make 52nd Pl. the **ONLY** safe route down the hill to Interurban Ave. (my knowledge from 35+ winters' driving experience)*

While I agree with having a safe way to walk down 53rd Avenue toward Interurban Avenue, this unnecessary road change isn't the way to do it, and costs too much to both the residents and the city treasury, and the real solution is much simpler and cost effective for everyone. 53rd Ave. *already has a sidewalk half way up the hill*, and there is plenty of room on the west side of the road to build a sidewalk, with a crosswalk connector, to complete the pedestrian access to Interurban Avenue and the Metro bus stops. Without a public hearing, we cannot debate and discuss these challenges, or come up with a real solution that everyone in the neighborhood can endorse. Since the public has not been informed, we need time to take a good, solid, comprehensive look at the Public Works Department proposal, but we need your help. The Tukwila City Council needs to put this on hold, and quickly, before any more money is needlessly spent. If you have any more information, I'd love to see it.

I am also making records, evaluation, & studies inquiries to the Public Works Office, but don't have any confidence that they will honor my requests now, since they haven't been honest about what they've been up to this year...

James A. Felker
Lifelong Tukwila resident
13935 56th Place South

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Tukwila network. Please **DO NOT** open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.

From: Emily Sarah Gendler Zisette <ezisette@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, October 7, 2019 5:32 AM
To: inmotion@kingcounty.gov
Cc: CityCouncil
Subject: Tukwila Metro Improvements
Attachments: Metro Improvements.png

Hello,

My name is Emily, I live in Tukwila and received the note on my door about King County Metro In Motion. Thanks for reaching out.

I have some feedback that could greatly improve transit riders experience in Tukwila that is also a public safety issue.

I live on 53rd Ave S between 52nd Ave S and S 137th St. This is just up the steep hill from the Interurban Park and Ride. Facing 53rd Ave S I witness the flow of bus riders as they walk to and from the bus stop at the Park and Ride. There are many!!! So many in fact, I see more pedestrians on this strip of 53rd Ave S, than the area of 53rd Ave S south of here next to Foster Park that the City just spent a year improving, yet neglected this northern section of 53rd near the Park and Ride. Many bus riders are walking to and from the Terrace Apartments and other apartment complexes around S 137th St.

There are serious street safety and accessibility issues on this section of 53rd Ave S between 52nd Ave S and S 137th St. I have brought this to the attention of the City of Tukwila many times, as has at least one of my neighbors and a friend who was living with me who is a wheelchair user. We have either been ignored or dismissed.

Because this is such an **important street in relation to Metro and bus riders**, I really hope you take the time to hear and address these concerns.

There needs to be improved pedestrian safety and access on this part of 53rd Ave S. The hill on this street is so steep it is a 'blind' hill, meaning when you are driving on it you can't see people walking on the street. There are no sidewalks on this street except for a small area at the bottom of this hill towards 52nd Ave S. People are forced to walk in the street with cars zooming by in both directions. There is also no line to distinguish lanes, and it is too narrow to safely fit cars going both ways.

Like I said when we've reached out to the city we got no response. I spent a lot of time tracking down the City Engineer by phone, and when we spoke he said there are setback issues that supposedly prevent them from putting in a sidewalk or even a *line* to mark of pedestrian area. A line! When I look across the street from me, I see where the neighbors property line was marked by a surveyor, and there is a good distance from their property line to where the asphalt starts for the road. I don't see why there can't be a sidewalk there. (You can even see the stop sign on 53rd Ave S and S 137th street is setback from the road.)

If necessary, this could even be made a one way street. In the photo below and attached see the red lines.

There are many elders and disabled folks who need access to this bus stop. I see many struggling up the extremely steep hill without sidewalks. Even able-bodied folks struggle! Many have to take a break half way up. Having lived with a wheelchair user bus rider I became aware of the safety and access issues here. Over the weekend I spoke with a man who is almost blind who said he's almost been hit by cars many times, and feels safer once he gets onto the sidewalk.

There is an empty lot on the west side of 53rd Ave S from 52nd Ave S up to about S 136th St. It would be of extreme value to turn this lot into a switch-back path that could ease the incline of the hill thus making the bus stop more accessible to especially elderly and disabled folks. On the picture attached you can get a visual of what I'm trying to describe: see the blue lines.

Incorporated into this project could be habitat preservation and restoration. There are some very well established and beneficial native trees, along with invasive plants like knotweed, etc. What a powerful and beneficial project this could be

for the Tukwila community and Metro Bus Riders. What about a community orchard of fruit trees planted between the switch-backs? See the green in the photo attached.

I really hope you consider these issues and I encourage people to actually come out to the empty lot and this street to really see what I'm talking about. You won't get the full experience since you don't live here, but please trust this is a serious issue. It is not a matter of *if* someone gets hurt or killed on this street, it is a matter of *when*. I don't think it will be a good look for the city when that happens, especially since multiple people have brought this up over the years. When I talk with the pedestrians who face this danger daily, everyone agrees it is a problem but nobody thinks the city cares or will do anything about it. There is so much apathy and distrust that they don't feel it's worth it to say anything. When I reach out to you it is not just for me, it is to advocate for all these people who feel unsafe.

The fact that the city spent so much time and money putting sidewalks in the section of 53rd Ave S next to the park, but neglected this part of 53rd I think really demonstrates a lack of accountability and just kind of showed me no one on that project must actually live in this area of Tukwila. Because if they did they would see the need to continue improvements up 53rd Ave S to the bus stop on Interurban. With such a major commuting area with the extremely popular bus stop and Park and Ride, I hope Metro also takes this seriously.

Thank you for your time in reading this message.

Emily

