

My name is Catherine Ushka, I'm running for reelection Tacoma city council district number four, and we're standing in the middle of it right now. I'm running for a number of reasons, largely including interests in health equity and environmental justice, which is pivotal to this conversation, because this is a conversation where we're going to get on the bus and we're going to ride route 42.

What do you think is the most pressing mobility concern in your district?

I think the most pressing mobility concern in my district is both micromobility and transit, in part because, like we discussed before, for Pierce Transit, if you want to go downtown or out of town, it's great but across district, or to get services, it's more challenging. Micro mobility, mobility, there's a lot of missing sidewalks, that sort of thing. There's a lot that we have done in terms of infrastructure along east 40th, and you'll see further down here on McKinley will come all the way across to where the bike trails connects on 65th, eventually. So we're getting better at cross district micromobility we really need to work on transit, too, because micromobility only works if you're fully ambulatory, right, so.

What do you think is the most important transportation project in Tacoma currently?

I think there's two I think the most exciting thing that's going to be the completion of the Link stop opportunity up to the hilltop. It'll, I look forward to where it will connect in the future, and it's certainly a long time in coming back in the day I was on the side vying for Portland and into the East Side, but I'm certainly glad it's in Hilltop. The second one is BRT. I'll be the first one in Pierce County, and there's a lot of challenges to it, but it will provide connectivity from the Roy Y all the way to downtown. So as long as we can make sure that neighborhoods within Tacoma are also connected to that. So it's a way to Tacoma and not just through Tacoma. It's going to be an asset that we probably can't really quantify because it's going to allow businesses to thrive, but it's also going to allow mobility of people that they didn't have it before because of those time constraints that we talked about with transit. And of course, it's going to and it's going to stress the need of that cross- district transportation that we didn't have before or so answering those last mile connections between blocks will become more critical. And I think it gives them a greater chance of being solved and solving it always funding.

Pierce Transit is considering going to the ballot to ask voters for a 0.3% sales tax increase for public transportation funding. If Pierce Transit were to go to the ballot in 2022, would you support the measure?

I need to know more about what their specific plans are. I love it all in concept. I'm a little bit worried about the timing coming out of Covid and the tax burden that we already carry, sending it to the ballot and let the voters decide. I'll never object to that. But I think that everything that you're talking about is absolutely necessary. we don't have a — pardon?

[off camera] you gotta see the details

[Ushka] I gotta see the details. I think that the services that they're going to offer are vital to our community. I also think it's a difficult time to talk about increasing taxes coming out of the pandemic. So looking at those details, I'm really going to encourage voters to look at them and see what the services are. There things that they agree that we need that vote for the tax. And if they can't do it right now,

then we need to look at what time is the right time for those things that we've talked about. Like connectivity to services in areas like District four throughout the county and city for quite quite frankly, are really vital to not just the longevity of transit, but really for our environment as well, because transit is linked to our environment, is linked to our health the more that we get out there. So I think it's a really important question. And I'm going to take it very seriously.

Is there anything else you want to tell us about your goals around transportation?

Well like I said, I'm a really big micromobility advocate, and I think that we really need to make sure that we're advocating not just for a way to get to work, but a way for recreation in areas like the 4th District, where health outcomes are lower than most other areas, not just only in the city, but in the county. It's important to encourage people to get out and enjoy nature and exercise a little bit. And it goes a long, long way. That and increasing the tree canopy, you might not know. But the lowest tree canopy in all of the Puget Sound region is right here in District four in the South Tacoma. So four and five. So increasing that canopy, getting people outside to recreate and increase and connecting these trail beds so that people can use them effectively for recreation, but also effectively to get to work is a lot of what I'm excited about, transportation. We've taken great steps in the last decade and there's a long way to go. But I think that our focus has been pretty pretty crystallized on making sure that connectivity happens. Looking at the equity map and things like that. So I hope you'll join me in that excitement. Come over to the east side, take a ride down the pipeline trail. It's one of the most beautiful trails you'll find in the county.