

NORTH K STREET LINE - WSHS 1895 Image

# Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. Feb. 2019  
501(c)(3) Organization Volume 89

## Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting Features Tacoma Public Works Director

Interested in knowing a bit more about the City's timeline regarding the Street Initiative Projects? Or information on the funding the city has received to create a sidewalk crew to address unsafe/unfit sidewalks, or about the LINK Light Rail progress up Division St.? Then, you're in luck!

Tacoma's Public Works Director Kurtis Kingsolver will be on hand the evening of February 21<sup>st</sup> to address all these issues, as well as field any questions the group may have regarding work on specific streets within the neighborhood. He will also try to cover other Public Works issues that directly affect the NSHD, i.e., the crosswalk at North 4<sup>th</sup> and I St.

There will be a Q & A portion to the presentation, so bring your questions and Kurtis will be happy to follow up later with those questions that may be outside the scope of his department in Public Works.

Questions? Call Judy Martin, 253-572-3059.

**Feb. 21, 6:30 for coffee time  
Program starts at 7pm  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church  
Entrance on N. 9th**

## NEW DADU CODE NEEDS CHANGES

By Julie Turner

There is bad news from the city's efforts to write a new code to permit Detached Accessory Dwelling Units in all Tacoma neighborhoods. City Council's IPS Committee has voted to gut the provisions of the 2016 Pilot Program – thus **eliminating requirements for off-street parking, one-owner in one-unit, and design guidelines**; (NSHD's design guidelines remain under terms of the Historic Register.)

The 2016 Pilot Program for DADUs kept the size and height modest (cottages, not houses) and established design guidelines for DADUs so the new building would complement the style of the main house. It addressed adjacent-neighbor concerns, as well as providing for some parking, and required an owner living in one unit. It was a good approach that allowed some housing variety within a framework for consideration for the neighborhoods.

But, the Pilot Program was cancelled after only one DADU was built, and, this January the new code guts the Pilot Program's modest approach for one that allows buildings up to 1200 SF, and 25 ft. high with a pitched roof, on lots of only 5000 SF. This seems **too big for an added dwelling on a small lot. No parking, either.**

DADUs can offer a useful housing alternative and benefit neighborhoods **if done right**. The original pilot program was well-crafted and thoughtful, but the current proposal is not.

Since this code is now sent to the Council, **please write** to Council members and suggest they scale back the current proposal to what was in the Pilot Project: **reduced size and height, one owner-occupied unit, and some off-street parking.**

Continued on page 2

## NEW DADU CODE NEEDS CHANGES

Please write to council members **soon**:

- Chris Beale [chris.beale@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:chris.beale@cityoftacoma.org)
- Ryan Mello [ryan.mello@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:ryan.mello@cityoftacoma.org)
- Anders Ibsen [anders.ibsen@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:anders.ibsen@cityoftacoma.org)
- Conor McCarthy [conor.mccarthy@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:conor.mccarthy@cityoftacoma.org)
- Lillian Hunter [lillian.hunter@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:lillian.hunter@cityoftacoma.org)
- Robert Thoms [robert.thoms@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:robert.thoms@cityoftacoma.org)
- Keith Blocker [keith.blocker@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:keith.blocker@cityoftacoma.org)
- Catherine Ushka [catherine.ushka@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:catherine.ushka@cityoftacoma.org)
- Victoria Woodward, Mayor contact [dmscott@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:dmscott@cityoftacoma.org)

“There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here and there, but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody.”  
By Richard Moe

## CALL BEFORE YOU HAMMER

Within NSHD boundaries, all exterior changes to the structure of a house, other than painting and minor repairs, **MUST** be reviewed by the



Historic Preservation Office to determine if the changes need a Landmarks Commission review.

This includes:

- Changing or replacing windows
- Changing or replacing siding
- Adding, replacing or changing a porch or deck or dormer

Before you start, call the Historic Preservation Officer 253-591-5220 or (253) 591-5254 for helpful information and advice.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission’s design review, and the City of Tacoma’s Historic Preservation Office is moving the review process to the online Tacoma Permits system: <http://tacomapermits.org/>

## Little Free Libraries in NSHD

Over the last few years, our neighborhood has been lucky to have a dozen or more Little Free Libraries built in front of homes, and stocked with good books to read for all ages. How great it is to have books added, **and returned!** All of us who use the Librairies should thank the owners of them; it takes time and money to keep putting in books, even with donations from users. Return of books and donating new ones is a tiny price for a book when you need one.

A disturbing trend developed last year - libraries scooped clean of books by someone in the early morning, leaving an empty box. We hope 2019 sees an end to this sad trend.

### Take a Book, Share a Book

1105 N 5th	819 N J St	1023 N Cushman Ave
1014 N 5th	909 N J St	1211 Division
1309 N 7th	1207 N K	1107 N M
1110 N 8th	1017 N L St	817 N I St
607 N M	714 N M	



# How Tacoma Became Leaders in Public Power in the PNW

By Jeff Ryan, Tacoma Architect

The history of Tacoma's power system is well-known in the power industry, but relatively unknown by the general public. Its impact on the nation's power system is something that has been over-shadowed by larger projects and passage of time. The Cushman Power Project serves as an important example of how a small act can have wide-ranging benefits beyond limited cities. While a project of this size has both positive and negative impacts, we will cover the good rather than the bad in this article.

Tacoma's power and water system started in 1893 when the citizens of Tacoma purchased a system started by Charles Wright and General Sprague in 1884. Unfortunately, the city bought a lemon, but it slowly improved the system, with time taken to construct a dam on the Nisqually (1909-1912), and a steam plant on Dock Street (1922).

But population growth rapidly outpaced reliable electrical power being produced to serve the demand. The city had to rely on power from additional private sources to meet the demand, namely Puget Power and Rail, a company that routinely changed power rates, and caused brownouts by selling to other cities and towns willing to pay more than Tacoma.

By 1917, Tacoma residents had had more than enough of private-power monopolies, and in 1918 they voted to fund an assessment of other possible sources for electrical power for the city. The Skokomish River at Lake Cushman was chosen as a preferred site, having been assessed by the City of Seattle, but abandoned due to a lack of transmission lines to that city.

Site-clearing and engineering started in 1920 and a ballot measure was put before the Tacoma voters in 1924 for a four million dollar bond to fund the project - after the measure passed the City Council by a single vote.

The measure was approved by the public by a 2 to 1 margin, even after an advertising and political push by Puget Power to try to discredit the project. Thus, the Cushman Dam project, like the Nisqually project, was ***funded by the people of Tacoma a full ten years before the Federal government got into the power and reclamation business.***



The project, as approved, included a dam and power house at Lake Cushman, 44 miles of power lines from Hood Canal to Tacoma, including the longest unsupported power line in the world at the Narrows.

The eastern terminal of the system was at the Cushman Substation on N. 21<sup>st</sup> St.; additionally, there were three smaller substations to distribute power to the North and Central areas of the city. Cushman Lake, west of Hood Canal, became the eighth-largest man-made reservoir in North America at the time of its construction.

The Cushman power project was finished in less than 26 months, by virtue of crews working day and night. **When it was done in May of 1926, the project had come in underbudget and had cost less than half of what a comparable, privately-funded project available at the time.**

Continued on page 4

**With the completion of the project Tacoma had the lowest power rates in the nation and became fully independent from private power sources.** The project also produced enough power to supply other municipalities from Mason County to Seattle and generate a profit of \$50,000 per month, allowing the city to pay off the bonds by July of 1940. With the cheap power came more industry on the port and the need for a second dam on the Skokomish that started power operation in 1931.

The impact of the Cushman Power Project stretched beyond our city, proving the worth of public power and validating its champions.

Homer T. Bone was an attorney in Tacoma and an outspoken **advocate for public power** as early as 1907. He was also the attorney for Tacoma City Light and the Port of Tacoma leading up to and through the Cushman Project. Based on his lectures and support for public power, H. T. Bone was elected to the US Senate in 1933, and the next year co-authored a bill establishing the Bonneville Power Administration, based on the success of the Cushman Power Project.

The engineers that came from across the west coast, like J. L. Standard, Chief Engineer, who offered to work for a third the going rate just to be on the project, went on to play leading roles in both the **Bonneville Projects** on the Columbia and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The TVA even based its power rates on Tacoma's progressive method of charging industry more to lower the rates of homeowners.

One engineer, a Tacoma native and Stadium graduate, Alvin Darland, became the Superintendent of Electrical Design and Construction for Cushman, and went on to be the Chief Construction Engineer for Grand Coulee, and later the **Superintendent for Grand Coulee**.

The Cushman Project served as a guiding light for other Public Power Projects that followed and helped to regulate the cost of power in the U.S. as an alternative to the private power



monopolies. The Northwest Public Power Association notes Homer T. Bone as the “Father of Northwest Public Power” and issues an award in his name each year.

The Cushman Substation is the public face of this important project in our history, reminding us of the values of those who came before us to make the city a better place to live and work.

\*\*\*\*

## **Let's Re-purpose Cushman Sub-Station for Public Use**

The Cushman buildings, the main one facing N. 19th, between Adams and Washington, and a small one on N. Adams, are on the Tacoma, the Washington, and the National Registers of Historic Places. Currently, the “**Friends of Tacoma's Cushman Substation**,” an organization of volunteers who want to see public use of this unique property, is working to encourage future **public use** of it. The group favors **adaptive re-use of it**, in honor of those from Tacoma's past who envisioned public power as a benefit to the city and its citizens. The group would like to see the site used as a neighborhood park and the buildings used as a community center for all ages, but focusing on seniors, preschool children and the Arts.

***If you would like to support the “Friends of Cushman Station” in their quest for public use of the Cushman Substation, visit their site on Facebook at “Friends of Tacoma's Cushman Substation” for more information.***

# LOOKING BACK 20 YEARS

Taken from the *Trolley Times*, Feb. 1999

The North Slope Historic District started 26 years ago with the idea to stop home demolition. The North J Street portion was made official with Ordinance No. 25747, on August 8, 1995.

The NSHD expanded to include North I, K, L and M Streets with Ordinance No. 26144, October 28, 1997.

The final expansion, as noted in the 20 year old article, including Sheridan, Cushman, Ainsworth Grant, and other streets, was added to the NSHD with Ordinance No. 26611, April 4, 2000.

## Are You New to the North Slope Neighborhood?

If you live on Sheridan, Cushman, Ainsworth or Grant and no one has knocked on your door with the Historic Neighborhood materials, we'll be happy to bring them to you and explain the process for completion of the North Slope Neighborhood Historic District.

Contact Velda McDonald at 627-4192 for any of the streets; or Barbara Tomberg at 572-1532 for Sheridan; or Janice Birbaum at 272-7010 for Cushman.

Update for everyone: The Office of Historic Preservation is currently completing the research on each property in the application. The next step will be the presentation to the Landmarks Commission. It should take place sometime this spring.

## NEWS FROM THE NSHD - THAT YOU CAN TRUST

1. *Trolley Times* newsletter is supported by sponsorships and delivered to your front door 4 times a year. The current issue can always be found on our web site at: <https://goo.gl/dvPUdY>
2. The NSHD web site is: [tacomanorthslope.org](http://tacomanorthslope.org) and contains upcoming events, a list of board members, all issues of *Trolley Times* that have been printed over the last 25 years, plus a big library of articles published over the past 20 years.
3. North Slope News is an infrequently-sent email about NSHD current events. The next issue of the *Trolley Times* is announced this way. This information is only sent via email to those who want it. Add your name to the email list on the homepage [www.tacomanorthslope.org](http://www.tacomanorthslope.org)
4. Board Members have information. Their names and phone numbers are found on the NSHD web site at: [tacomanorthslope.org/contact.php](http://tacomanorthslope.org/contact.php)
5. The Board of Directors of NSHD, Inc. does not have a Facebook page or other social media.

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES...

Taken from the National Register of Historic Places Nomination for NSHD, Tacoma

Robert O. Duff and his wife, Rosa, lived in a house built by Robert in 1902 at 1115 North 11<sup>th</sup> St., conveniently on the K Street Trolley line. The couple had six sons and one daughter.



1115 North 11th

Duff was born on March 15, 1841 in Spencerville, Canada. Reportedly he immigrated to the United States in 1878, and is listed in the 1880 census as living in North Dakota. He moved to Tacoma c.1888 and started a construction business, building many homes in and around Tacoma during the building boom of the 1890s.

Duff and his partner, Alexander M. Bain, created many dwellings within what is now the North Slope Historic District. They acted as architect and contractor for the Lincoln K. Boyle Residence at 1315 North 11th Street (1889), the Bain Building at 1102 North Sheridan Avenue (1889), Professor Max Meyer Residence at 1105 North Sheridan Avenue (1889) and the Nelson E. Handsaker Residence at 1017 North Cushman Avenue (1889).

Acting alone, Duff was the architect and contractor for the John Handsaker Residence at 1015 North Cushman Avenue (1889), and the Frank Durr Residence at 809 North Sheridan

Avenue (1892). His two sons, Ralph M. and George W. followed in his footsteps. By 1908 Robert's focus shifted to development rather than actual construction; he was joined by his son Ralph in the real estate business, but George continued on as a builder.

\*\*\*\*

*As a side note, the home is currently under renovation by R4 Construction. The contractor told me that the owner informed him that there is an old, disused bomb shelter with a basement entrance in the home. I was told there was electricity in the shelter at one time, but it's now just a dark, damp room entered via a small door from the basement. The shelter extends clear across the side lawn toward the next house. It was probably built between the mid-1950s, into the 1960s - a cold war idea popular during this time period. Editor*



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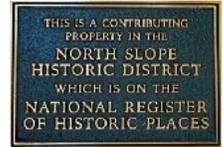
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## FOR SALE NSHD BRONZE PLAQUE

### Want a Plaque for Your House?

If you would like a bronze plaque to mark your house as part of the NSHD National Register of Historic Places, the NSHD, Inc. Board has them for sale. Plaques are 5 x 7 and cost \$80 each.



To purchase, contact Karen May  
253-779-0160, or [klmay@wamail.net](mailto:klmay@wamail.net)

**"A house comes with responsibilities, and a historic house comes with more responsibilities. We are only the caretakers of these houses, which were here before we owned them and which will be here after we are gone. They contain the wood from the old-growth forests, they are monuments to the skill of those who labored to build them, they represent our cultural heritage."**

**- Jane Powell, Actor**

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**TacomaNorthSlope.org** the NSHD web page

**TROLLEY TIMES.** The NSHD newsletter, published Feb., May, Aug., and Nov. Delivered to all single family homes in the NSHD. The current edition can always be found at: <https://goo.gl/5sdbHq>

**North Slope NEWS.** Sign up on NSHD web page, and have items of general NSHD news, events, and the on-line *Trolley Times* sent to you.

Send your questions, comments and remarks to [news@TacomaNorthSlope.org](mailto:news@TacomaNorthSlope.org)



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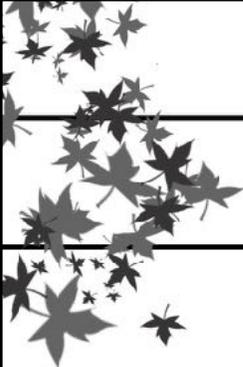
The Trolley Times has a new sponsor, located right inside NSHD at 502 N. L St. **Affordable Massage** is the creation of massage therapist Tracy Painter, who has spent 16 years helping patients to:

- Relieve stress and anxiety
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