**Levy to Move Seattle Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes  
  
Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 24, 2018 / 5:30 – 7:30 PM **Co-chairs:** Betty Spieth-Croll, Alex Krieg

**Location:** City Hall, L280

**Members Present:** Joe Laubach, Blake Trask, Brian Estes, Alex Krieg, David Seater, Emily Paine, Hal Cooper, Nick Paranjpye, Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Betty Spieth-Croll (on the phone), Jasmine Marwaha (for Councilmember O’Brien), Saroja Reddy (for Ben Noble)

**Members Absent:** Dustin Lambro, Ron Posthuma and Laurie Torres

**Guests:** Deputy Mayor Ranganathan (Mayor’s Office), Goran Sparrman, Mike Terrell, Karen Melanson, Nick Makhani, Darby Watson, (all SDOT), Pat Cohn (freight board)

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 5:35 PM**

**Public Comment** (2 min. per person)

Doug MacDonald:

“I have four things to say. First, this day has been coming since July and August of last year and it’s good to get started. Second, there has to be clearer data for stakeholders to participate. Third, when you work on a workplan, it’s worth noting that transportation policy is not a rollup of stakeholder interest as it is also necessary to look at tax payer interests and cost. Fourth, it is a difficult time for SDOT and is important to note that this was first revealed by SDOT’s staff last summer, so the staff deserve credit because the staff were the ones that noted that something needed to be fixed. The staff need to get credit for transparency and accountability on their own behalf.”

**Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

The February 2018 meeting minutes were provisionally approved by the committee with a friendly amendment to include an action item table that carries over on future meeting minutes, shows status updates, shows specifics on each action item, and includes deadlines.

**Co-chair Report**

* **Annual letter discussion**

Alex: A revised annual letter was sent out that incorporated feedback from several committee members. We will talk about this further later in the agenda.

**Director’s message**

Goran thanked the committee for participating tonight and began the Director’s message mentioning that he knew they had quite a bit of content to get through tonight, so he planned to move through the PowerPoint quickly. He also noted that he knew there was a fair amount of frustration on the part of the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) of not feeling updated on the progress with the assessment. Goran added that he had thought the assessment would take a month but since it did take longer, in hindsight, he wished that they had given the LOC a status update.

Goran also added that he wanted to acknowledge a few things. SDOT as an agency was not completely prepared to execute Levy program in 2015 and was slow to ramp up. He did add that while this was the case, he wanted to complement staff because they realized that there was an issue and initiated the creation of the Office of Move Seattle and hired a third-party consultant – CDM Smith – to look at organizational management issues that needed to be addressed.

Goran also added that when he came on board as SDOT’s Interim Director in January 2018, Mayor Durkan asked him to look at the Move Seattle budget because SDOT was not spending in the way they needed to be.

**Review and discussion of levy assessment report/assessment findings and next steps**

* **Agenda**

Goran: There is a lot of numerical analysis to back up what we are walking you through this evening. I expect us to be back here with more details, but we wanted to begin by presenting key findings rather than recommendations, so we could work with you and the modal groups to develop the recommendations, especially those with key issues.

* **Reviewed voter-approved levy package**

Goran: Voters approved the Levy to Move Seattle in 2015. The 9-year levy included a proposed investment map with a preliminary list of projects to be funded with levy dollars. The map on the right likely looks familiar.

The Levy’s three core objectives were to:

* Provide safe and accessible routes connecting schools, transit hubs, and other destinations
* Reduce the backlog of maintenance and repair work along major arterials and Seattle’s busiest streets
* Enhance transportation choices throughout the network

The levy also outlined several tiers of commitments – three categories outlining deliverables for the 10 programs and 31 sub-programs. The assessment looked at all of them.

In 2015, SDOT estimated $1.77 billion in funding to deliver the Levy to Move Seattle. Funding sources were $930M from the levy itself, $285M from local funding and $564 from grants and partnership dollars

* **Levy implementation timeline**

Goran:The levy passed in November 2015 and was implemented in January 2016. In May 2016, this LOC was created. In January 2017, SDOT staff began noticing issues, especially the uncertainty around federal leverage assumptions included in the levy. SDOT had been fairly successful in acquitting leverage in the past but we are not able to get the level of leverage we now need. This led to creation of the Office of Move Seattle in October 2017 and a review of the levy in January 2018.

* **What have we accomplished today**

Goran: We have actually accomplished quite a bit of low-hanging fruit projects that were easier to complete and execute.

* **Levy Assessment – thought it would be easy, very complex**

Goran: SDOT has spent a lot of time confirming assumptions and levy commitments by reconciling stakeholder and campaign commitments. SDOT has also worked to assess each sub-program’s scope, schedule and cost. In addition, a third-party consultant – CDM Smith – reviewed SDOT’s program management and suggested strategies for improvement.

Alex: What were the conflicting assumptions of levy commitments?

Goran: One example is that 100 blocks of sidewalk were added to the levy program without adjustments to the budget.

Nick: Are you at the point where you have confirmed the assumptions?

Goran: We have confirmed most but there are some key subprograms where they have not yet been reconciled which becomes a real issue in certain sub-programs.

* **Key findings**

Goran: Our first key finding is that parts of the original levy program need further review and adjustment due to a few different factors. Local construction costs are rising due to good economic conditions. We anticipated a 2.05% increase in annual cost and last year costs rose approximately 3.03%. Cost estimates were also insufficient in the original levy budget. Finally, there are also limited federal grant opportunities and it looks gloomy for opportunities.

Blake: I’m trying to square that statement with the recent Federal Omnibus package which has record small starts grants money. Do you have clues that you won’t be getting that money?

Goran: From what we are hearing from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the picture does not look as rosy, but you are right that we do not know.

Alex: Do you know what the new federal leverage number will be?

Elliot: The original leverage assumption was $564M with approximately $400M in federal leverage. It is now closer to $200M.

Brian: It is difficult to provide draft recommendations when we have not received the data. Should we have a meeting prior to the next meeting to review data?

Goran: That is up to the committee. SDOT is ready to package and provide you information as you need it and meet your timelines. Moving onto the next key finding, there have also been additional citywide transportation priorities established since the levy passed in 2015.

Brian: Who decided what gets list to master lists of projects?

Goran: I don’t think that the decision-making process in the past has been clear; in the future I would like to make it clear.

Blake: Legislation allows 10% of funds to be moved around over the life of the Levy, is that something that City Council would approve?

Goran: Currently, we are not making suggestions to change the buckets of funding across sub-programs. Our final finding was to rework program management structure. We identified the need to streamline and accelerate contracting; ensure consistent systems and tools for measuring projects and risk and identify critical resources early. Goran noted that he was concerned with how SDOT has measured risk in the past and felt it took too long to identify the resources needed.

Nick: When you measure projects, are you measuring projects for 2018, 2019, or 2020?

Goran: SDOT will measure all projects at the right point in time.

Nick: Will you be updating those estimates each year?

Goran: Yes, SDOT will update the estimates annually to incorporate inflation.

Nick: Who completes the estimates for SDOT?

Goran: Small to medium projects should be done by SDOT staff. Consultants should complete estimates for the larger, complex projects.

* **Levy deliverable commitments**

Goran: Overall 23 of the 31 levy sub-programs are in good shape and 8 need attention.

Rachel: What I like about this is that it is honest about what needs work. The LOC has been complaining about the sliding goal posts that have been presented to make it seem like everything is doing well and on-track. I really appreciate having the opportunity to look at projects that are doing well and those that are not doing as well so we can be involved in the process. I think that this is a major step.

Goran: Bad news is often hidden in public agencies with the hope that it goes away. It’s important to get the bad news out there and talk about it. I really appreciate your role in the evaluation process.

Brian: The Vision Zero program shows a green checkmark but there have been projects cancelled recently by SDOT so that does not seem to match.

Goran: Let’s have a side conversation as I don’t have enough information to fully answer that question at the moment.

* **Sub-program findings**

Goran: There are 8 sub-programs that need adjustment or further review. We want to work with the LOC and the modal boards to provide independent review to come to consensus on next steps and recommendations.

Alex: What do you see as role of LOC in this exercise?

Goran: We want to work with appropriate advisory boards to determine the right outcomes with the amount of money we have. To use the Bicycle Master Plan as an example, the levy commitment did not match the BMP. It’s very tempting to build cheaper products but that might not be the right way to achieve our goals. Next week, we want to start packaging more detailed information for the modal boards as we begin meeting with them. In early summer, we would come back to LOC to share their input.

Pat: In establishing criteria, will we also need to consider the rise in inflation and the federal funding uncertainty.

Goran: Yes.

Emily: Are you planning to provide more specific information on how the bike projects are not aligned with the BMP?

Goran: We plan to show you what we have accomplished to date. It will be important for all the boards to come up with a schedule so we can meet your needs.

* **Bike Master Plan**

Goran: The levy commitment is to build approximately 50 miles of new Protected Bike Lanes (PBLs) and 60 miles of greenways, completing over half of the BMP citywide network. This costs more money than we currently have for this sub-program. Next steps are to work with the Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) to determine the right combination of bicycle facilities to build.

David: Are you also working at ways to reduce costs on these projects? PBLs are nice but also very expensive.

Goran: Yes, we need to look for ways to manage costs better. For example, the 2nd Ave bike lane cost approx. $12M/mile. A huge part of that cost was the signals at each intersection and addressing drainage challenges. Darby and her staff have worked very hard to reduce costs for bike lanes to reduce costs.

Emily: When you are budgeting for the changes in this sub-program, are you going to budget somewhere in between low end and $12M/mile.

Darby: An important thing to consider will be that there is a significant difference in what we build in the Center City vs. what we build outside of the Center City.

Blake: I would like to see a better version of the cost breakdown – cost for bike lanes vs. signals vs. drainage.

Goran: SDOT will have a more detailed discussion with you and SBAB on budget. When we do a PBL, safety must be our number one concern. For example, we cannot have a large puddle in the middle of a PBL so we must adjust drainage in certain locations. In addition, before signals were in place on 2nd Ave, there was a tragic accident. We need to be cautious and focus on the must-haves to achieve our project objectives.

Blake: Fundamentally, SDOT needs to reframe projects to be clear if they are a PBL project or a safe streets project.

Goran: Agreed. Darby is holding us accountable to ensure that when we make decisions, we are being smart about the way we are framing the project.

* **New sidewalks**

Goran: The levy commitment is to build 150 new blocks of sidewalks, filling more than 75% of the sidewalk gaps on priority transit corridors citywide with an emphasis on creating accessible reroutes for those with disabilities and for the elderly. This costs more money than we currently have, and additional blocks were added to the budget with no additional funding. Next steps are to work with the Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) to determine how this deliverable will be measured within available funding.

Alex: Who added the additional sidewalk blocks?

Goran: I believe it came from the prior policymaker at a high level.

* **Multimodal RapidRide**

Goran: The levy committed to 7 transit corridors. With current funding and partnership funding from King County, we can do the basic version. We do not have funding to meet the community’s expectations on each of the 7 corridors.

Rachel: Can you give me an example of what the optimum treatment looks like?

Goran: This table outlines the differences:



* **Sidewalk safety repair**

Goran: The levy commitment is to repair up to 225 blocks of damaged sidewalks in our urban centers and villages. SDOT wants to work with the LOC to develop the best option for this sub-program.

* **AMM**

Goran: The levy commitment is to repave 65 targeted locations every year, totaling about 70 lane-miles of arterial street, with a repair and maintenance program run by City crews. This is a sub-program where we are looking to find ways to bring down unique costs. SDOT wants to work with the LOC to develop the best option for this sub-program.

* **AAC**

Goran: The levy commitment is to repave up to 180 lane-miles of arterial streets. SDOT also wanted to acknowledge that while the paving list was not a levy commitment, it was shared publicly, and certain projects may need to be reprioritized. SDOT will share those projects with this group.

Alex: What are the leverage opportunities that are not likely to be available?

Karen: We assumed a decent amount of money in preservation grants and have revised the assumption of what we think we would be able to get.

* **Bridge replacement**

Goran: This levy commitment is vague and needs to be revised so it is clear how to use available resources. We have proposed the following next steps - SDOT will prioritize paving projects based on pavement condition and travel volumes to meet the levy commitment to repave arterial streets within available funding. SDOT will also allocate about $5 million towards pedestrian and bike safety projects on bridges with focus on the Ballard Bridge.

* **Curb ramps & crossings**

Goran: Under the consent decree, SDOT is required to construct 1250 curb ramps so the cost for this sub-program has increased. Curb ramp projects have added “nice-to-haves” and we need to think about how to decrease costs

Alex: How much do ramp costs?

Mike: Between $12.5K - $20K. SDOT is looking at just putting ramp costs in this sub-program and putting drainage and other costs in a different spot.

Blake: What are the next steps in the analysis

Goran: Focus less on the “nice-to-haves” and more on the “must-haves” We will bring info back to you and report on it.

* **Public engagement**

Goran: The proposed plan for public engagement is to begin in May with engagement of the modal boards. SDOT will work this week to identify schedule for advisory boards. In June, the plan is to develop draft recommendations with input from modal boards and the LOC. SDOT wants the LOC to react to draft recommendations and public comments. Feedback would be incorporated, and recommendations finalized by July.

This schedule is subject to review. The Mayor’s Office shares a strong sense of urgency with SDOT, but you also need to have enough time to act in your advisory role.

* **Next steps**

Goran: Our next steps include integrating our financial conversations to adjust cash flow, as needed. You should expect changes to cash flow to adjust for our updated estimates. SDOT will also be preforming a full Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) on the Levy to Move Seattle and utilizing program management strategies proposed by CDM Smith.

* **Questions**

Alex: Does that mean a RET was not performed on the original levy?

Elliot: It was performed on the original levy and will be performed on the updated recommendations.

Rachel: I just wanted to add that pedestrian stress is just as big of an issue as bike stress.

Goran: Agreed. Important that the end project is a safe project.

Blake: When you present projects to different boards – will you distinguish must-haves with good-to-haves?

Goran: As much as possible.

Joe: This is the first time that this committee has been told that the levy deliverables may fall short of the levy commitments. Will we be told big picture what the shortfall will look like – the difference between 10% and 40% is huge. I want to know if that will be part of the follow-up info.

Goran: Yes, and modal boards will see that information as well. We will report it as recommendations move into draft form.

Joe: I am also excited that you are going to be seeking input. I feel that this committee has been an underutilized asset and I feel that we have valuable input to share.

Goran: It’s not surprising that the co-chairs have a similar view. You all have an extremely important role. SDOT needs to be more transparent and not just use engineers but incorporate community input as well.

Emily: What can the modal boards expect to see at their next meetings?

Goran: SDOT needs to engage with the modal boards quickly. The outcome would be a draft recommendation that would then be shared with the LOC. You need to see that info with enough time to be able to digest it before the LOC meeting.

Elliot: We have reached out to SDOT liaison for each modal board to put time on the agenda.

Alex: Transit board is tomorrow or the day before we meet. Seems that their timeline could be the most problematic with the decisions that need to be made. Will we still be able to hear their input?

Elliot: At your next meeting, you will likely hear feedback on the 3 subprograms from the modal boards – Bike Master Plan (BMP), Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) and Multimodal. For the other 5 sub-programs you will hear recommendations.

Pat: Do you have plans to contact freight advisory board?

Elliot: Yes, we reached out to staff.

Alex: At the May LOC meeting, we will be reviewing feedback?

Mike: Yes, and a more detailed review of 5 sub-programs.

Alex: How much of this was a surprise?

Goran: Staff brought it to me because they wanted to incorporate input and program management strategies within SDOT. In the past there has been a lot of outside pressure on staff. I will ensure we have a good high-level management system moving forward so that the system put in place by staff can work.

Alex: When can we get more info about 8 sub-programs, including the amount of impact and what can and cannot be delivered? Most of this has not been surprising and I would hope that SDOT could provide it one week in advance of our next May meeting.

Goran: We can provide that or could also provide it at a meeting prior to your scheduled May meeting.

Alex: Can we also talk about what finalize means?

Goran: My perspective is that finalize means when you agree that 3 areas with sub-program and modal board approaches are correct and that 5 sub-programs have recommendations. We are working closely with Councilmember O’Brien.

Dep. Mayor Ranganathan: Councilmembers O’Brien and Johnson have already been briefed.

Jasmine: Councilmember O’Brien has every intention of memorializing this and hearing it in committee.

Pat: I have a question for Betty - did we have issues like this with Bridging the Gap?

Betty: We did not have issues like this, but the Levy was much smaller. The economic environment was also different, and projects could be delivered. What we are finally doing is looking at the reality and we have a big job to do to reset the numbers.

Brian: Can you address the arrow on the timeline that notes “SDOT continues to deliver projects.” If we are talking about transparency and how these are decisions are made, can you answer why these decisions on Vision Zero Montlake and the 4th Ave PBL were made without input from the advisory boards?

Goran: SDOT recommended delay of 4th Ave so we could proceed with two others. Direction to staff has been that while we conduct the review and assessment, we continue work on the 23 programs in good shape so that we do not slow down momentum.

Emily: Could we shift funding from green areas to red areas?

Goran: My understanding is that we have up to 10% discretion to shift money. The reason we assumed no changes is because we want to maintain the principle commitments that the Levy made to the public. Moving money around felt like hiding the issue.

Emily: Is it possible to look at cost savings in programs that are doing well to shift money?

Alex: I want to reiterate that this is about dollars and cents but we can’t have the conversation without money information and we also cannot provide oversight function.

Goran: I think we have heard you loud and clear on that.

Question: Is SDOT making plans should the federal administration change?

Goran: If the funding picture changes, we are ready to respond quickly. For example, in the RapidRide program, there are decision points based on potential changes to funding.

**Oversight Committee Annual Letter Discussion**

The LOC discussed the Annual Letter and whether to approve the current letter.

Alex: It is challenging to not want to talk about what we just learned in our 2017 annual letter, but we strived to keep the focus of the letter to what happened in 2017 given that the purpose of the letter is a retrospective report to the Mayor and Council. In our 2018 annual letter, we plan to incorporate the assessment. I also want to note that we did note our concerns with underspending.

Pat: The last paragraph on page 2 also leads nicely into what we heard about tonight.

Brian: If we really want to address what has happened to date, we need to include the safety projects, including several safety projects that have been canceled recently, that have not received input from the Modal Boards or the LOC. I do not believe SDOT is taking our input seriously.

Pat: The annual letter’s objective is to address 2017.

Blake: Suggestion to write a separate letter from this process in Q1/2.

Alex: He agreed that the LOC needs to be in close coordination with the advisory boards, particularly as part of this new charge to adjust several sub-programs. Recognizing that this letter only covers work in 2017, he motioned to adopt the letter.

Rachel and Blake: Seconded the motion.

Brian: I agree if we submit a separate letter on the safety projects that is separate from the reset.

Darby: You may want to hear from the Vision Zero representatives prior to writing the letter.

2017 annual letter was approved.

**Modal Board Representative Updates**

David: The Pedestrian Advisory Board was updated on the sidewalk condition assessment report. Essentially, we need more sidewalk repairs which makes this update unfortunate. We are also waiting on Mayoral and Council approval of half of the board members

Pat: The Freight Advisory Board is beginning to implement our master plan. We meet the third Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.

Emily: The Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) spent most of April talking about the postponed 4th Ave Protected Bike Lane project and talking about traffic stress. SBAB is not happy with decision to postpone the 4th Ave Protected Bike Lane project.

**Action items**Action items below capture action items from previous meetings, beginning with the February 2018 meeting. Complete items will remain on action item tracker for one additional meeting minutes to capture “complete” status and then be removed.

| **Action item** | **Meeting** | **Lead** | **Status** | **Deadline** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017 Move Seattle Report | April 24 | SDOT | On hold until after the assessment | TBD |
| Determine LOC meeting dates in June | April 24 | LOC co-chairs Elliot | **Complete:** Meeting dates set for 6/7 and 6/21 | May 4 |
| Request to provide additional budget information on all 8 sub-programs at May 24 meeting | April 24 | SDOT | **Complete:** SDOT provided [data sheets](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/About/Funding/2018_0518_WorkplanUpdate_SubProgramData.pdf) in advance of 5/24 meeting. Data sheets are also posted online | May 21 |
| Send April meeting date to committee members | Feb. 22 | Elliot | **Complete:** Elliot sent date to committee members | March 2 |
| Sent Fauntleroy statement from Genesee Adkins to committee members | Feb. 22 | Elliot | **Complete:** Elliot sent statement and included in summary online | March 2 |
| Review final version of annual letter for approval at April meeting | Feb. 22 | LOC co-chairs Elliot | **Complete:** Letter approved | April 24 |
| Create timeline for appropriate opportunities for the LOC to receive updates and feedback re: Fauntleroy | Feb. 22 | Elliot | **Complete:** Reflected in May Fauntleroy action item above | April 24 |
| Data on how SDOT tracks cumulative progress or delay for projects | Feb. 22 | Elliot | Elliot to work with team to send data to LOC | June 7 |
| Data with breakdown of striping and how SDOT determines whether to stripe or restripe a road | Feb. 22 | SDOT | Elliot to provide data via email | June 1 |
| Further discussion about SDOT responses to the CDM Smith Report and follow-up in 2018 and when the committee can expect an update | Feb. 22 | SDOT | Updates included as part of assessment work | Ongoing |
| Add cumulative deliverable count to SDOT annual report | Feb. 22 | SDOT | Elliot to track and add | TBD |
| Add discussion to future agenda regarding performance measures on the levy dashboard | Feb. 22 | SDOT | Elliot to add to future agenda | TBD |
| Send materials earlier to committee | Feb. 22 | SDOT | **Complete:** Since April, SDOT has been sending materials earlier to LOC members | April 20 |
| Review policy regarding posting meeting materials online | Feb. 22 | LOC co-chairs Elliot | Elliot to add to future agenda | TBD |

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT: 7:40 PM**