

## Levy to Move Seattle Oversight Committee Meeting

[Levy Oversight Committee bylaws – adopted April 2017](#)  
[Move Seattle Levy legislation, approved June 29, 2015\)](#)

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, February 2, 2021 / 5:00 – 7:00 PM

**Co-chairs:** Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Samuel Ferrara

**Location:** Video Conference

**Members present on the phone:** Ron Posthuma, Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Joseph Laubach, Samuel Ferrara, Patrick Taylor, Vicky Clarke, David Seater, Lisa Bogardus, Inga Manskopf, Jen Malley-Crawford, Jennifer Lehman, Dennis Gathard, Councilmember (CM) Alex Pederson

**Members Absent:** Kevin Werner, Hester Serebrin, Todd Biesold

**Guests:** Sam Zimbabwe, Rachel McCaffrey, Kristen Simpson, Jim Curtain, Summer Jawson, Matt Gemberling, Brian Dougherty, Katie Olsen, Dawn Schellenberg, Brian Sperry (all SDOT), Elliot Helmbrecht (Mayor's Office), Aaron Blumenthal (City Budget Office), Willa Hevly

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER:** 5:01 PM

### Welcome and roll call

Sam F: Outlined the agenda for the meeting and conducted a roll call for committee members. City staff and representatives then introduced themselves.

### Public Comment:

Sam F: Asked if anyone wanted to give public comment?

No public comment.

Sam Z: Shared his excitement about what we are planning to deliver in 2021. I want to acknowledge Lorelei's contributions and welcome Kristen Simpson who is here tonight and will be taking Lorelei's role as the executive sponsor for the Levy. Also, I want to thank the oversight committee on all the work you did on the COVID-19 Impact Assessment that was done last year.

Alex P: I want to echo Director Zimbabwe's comments and I look forward to talking more about how we can advance the city's Vision Zero program. And we have leftover \$60 Vehicle License Fee (VLF) funds and the new \$20VLF revenues. I'm also excited about the light rail stations that will be opening up at Brooklyn St, Northgate and other locations.

Sam F: Introduced the latest new committee member Dennis Gathard.

Dennis G: I am happy to be part of this committee. I'm an engineer and have worked on bridges in the city including the West Seattle Bridge original design.

### **Agenda item #1: Stay Healthy Streets – follow-up discussion to November 2, 2020 memo and December 2 LOC meeting**

Sam F: If you recall there was a [proposal from SDOT](#) to take funding from 4 levy greenway projects and allocate it to making 20 miles of Stay Healthy Streets permanent. The City asked for our input on this proposal. The bicycle and pedestrian boards met to discuss this issue and both boards like the idea of these Stay Healthy Streets but were hesitant in taking money from a levy program for this work. Ideally, we can come up with a consensus on how we want to reply to SDOT on this issue.

Jim C: We have had a lot of positive feedback on the Stay Healthy Streets program and the data shows we have more people walking and biking on these streets as a result. As you know, these streets were a response to COVID-19, and make it easier for people get around. We are looking to make 20 miles permanent. In some areas, we are looking to increase the space for pedestrians beyond what is currently available. Shifting the greenway program funding to these streets allows us to make these Stay Healthy Streets permanent immediately. Otherwise, we would need to pause this work.

Patrick T: We did take a vote and the boards did not support this proposal. That said, the boards do support Stay Healthy Streets and making them permanent. People were concerned that they hadn't seen the designs for these permanent Stay Healthy Streets.

Jennifer L: Many bicycle and pedestrian board members were hoping that the Greenways could look and feel like the Stay Healthy Streets.

Sam F: One thing missing in the memo but Jim provided is the cost, which is \$2.5M and it seems that amount of money could come from another source. Another thought I had was voter confidence and how it would look to voters, in a future levy vote, if the greenway funding was taken for the Stay Healthy Streets work.

Rachel B: Did you say that the board members wanted the greenways to look like Stay Healthy Streets?

Jennifer L: Yes, that was feedback from some members.

Rachel B: Are there members that support moving the funding to Stay Healthy Streets?

Ron P: Can someone comment on the importance of this fund transfer from the greenway projects? Can we leave the Stay Healthy Streets with temporary improvements?

Jim C: To continue keeping these streets as they are requires a lot of operations and maintenance cost to keep the temporary elements (signs, posts, markings) in place. These temporary elements can be blown away in windstorms and sometimes they are taken.

Rachel B: Can you comment on the design of the Stay healthy streets?

Jim C: We are still working with communities on the design for their specific neighborhood.

Vicky C: What are the other options? What happens if this committee does not support the funding transfer? Where is the maintenance costs coming from?

Jim C: The original funding was provided by the Federal government through the Cares Act. We are out of those funds so now we need to use Bicycle Master Plan funding for maintenance. The impact of not moving the greenway funding is pausing the Stay Healthy Streets work. There is the \$20VLF funding but there's a lot of other needs competing for these funds, those funds won't come in until July, and there is community outreach planned to determine how to allocate those funds. At this time, we don't have any other solid funding alternatives.

Joe L: If the LOC does not approve this transfer, SDOT would take the funding out of the BMP or PMP, correct?

Jim C: If we don't transfer the funds then we'll have temporary facilities and we would need to find the money to maintain them and would need to use our existing program funds.

Joe L: Stay Healthy Streets does not build out the bicycle master plan network so I am having trouble justifying this transfer.

Sam F: Wasn't the mayor's office asking for this funding transfer?

Sam Z: All of the Stay Healthy Streets are existing neighborhood greenways that we upgraded in response to COVID-19. We are seeing increases in walking and biking on these Stay Healthy Streets in response to these positive benefits.

Patrick T: Is there a way to make them cheaper? Several people on the board thought greenways would look like Stay Healthy Streets.

Jim C: The design approach we have taken is based on what we are hearing from the neighborhoods and their experiences.

Jennifer L: The other hesitancy the modal boards had was that the data showed more popularity with the Keep Moving Streets.

Jim C: The Keep Moving Streets tend to be next to popular parks so there's already more people in these areas.

Summer J: The design comes down to what it will take to implement in our historically underserved neighborhoods like Little Brook where there is spotty sidewalk, multi-family parking access issues, reopening businesses, and school bus access concerns, and so we need to look at the design on a block by block basis.

Inga M: I love this program. My main concern is transferring levy funds to non-levy deliverables. Has that been done before?

Elliott H: I don't think we had neighborhood greenways when the original Bridging the Gap levy passed.

Jim C: While we are not delivering new greenways, we are enhancing existing greenways significantly.

Vicky C: I see these as the potential to be the gold standard for greenways. To not make these Stay Healthy Streets permanent would be a loss. However, it seems like we are all not on board with this transfer.

Sam F: We like the concept of the Stay Healthy Streets but at the moment it seems that we are hesitant in approving this transfer of funds.

Jen M: If we say No, what will happen? Is maintenance going to stop?

Jim C: We are going to have to pause the program. And at some point, we'll need to decide if Stay Healthy Streets can be out there given the maintenance and operations costs. We'll continue to keep them maintained at this point. However, at some point, we may not be able to continue that work.

Jen M: Could we provide some funding transfer while SDOT seeks other funding?

Jim C: Yes, we could temporarily use these funds and continue to try to get other funds.

Sam F: We could say at this point that we are not on board with the transfer but we may reconsider in the future.

Patrick T: The modal boards may be more open if they saw more design information.

Vicky C: It seems like we are on the hook for the success of this program. How does it look if we don't support this and the program goes away? I'm uncomfortable with this.

Elliott H: I like Jen's idea. We will take your feedback to heart and talk to the budget office to see what other options are available but there may not be other solutions at this time. This was the easy path at the moment.

Rachel B: It sounds like we are not ready to support this now but we are interested in hearing from SDOT again on this. I think SDOT understands our concerns. If you come back in a month we can see where you are.

Sam F: I agree Rachel.

Elliott H: I'm not sure we could be back next month but we'll huddle and get back to you as soon as we can.

Joe L: I'd like SDOT to look at the Stay Healthy Streets on a case by case basis to determine where there is a significant benefit and where there isn't a benefit.

Summer J: We are looking into that to make sure they are in the right locations.

## **Agenda item #2: Committee business**

### *Subcommittees and report-outs – Inga Manskopf*

Inga M: Anything else from modal broads?

Patrick T: No

Jennifer L: No

Jen M: No

Inga M: There's three subcommittees we want to continue. The financial (Ron P), program deliverables (me and Rachel B), and another that I'll get in touch with Jen M and Rachel M about offline.

*Meeting minutes for approval (September, October, November, December 2020) – Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Sam Ferrara*

Sam F: I promised Rachel that we would approve the past minutes from September, October, November, and December 2020.

Ron P: I motion to approve all of these meeting minutes.

Rachel B: I second the motion.

Sam F: OK, the minutes are approved.

*LOC's 2020 reflection letter discussion – Sam Ferrara, Kevin Werner*

Sam F: Keep it short. If we have three important points it would be better received and responded to versus having 30 points. I'd like to hear your reflection on last year and what we would like to see moving forward.

Rachel B: I'll help write it.

Sam F: We could mention issues like COVID-19, budget shortfalls, and the next levy. For the COVID related items we gave prioritization, we could reaffirm those or make revisions. Equity and projects in construction were important factors.

Joe L: I think we should reiterate our direction to SDOT earlier, prioritizing safe routes over other levy programs in the context of the city's Vision Zero goal.

Inga M: We should highlight the Lander Street Overpass being completed. We can say something about the Northgate pedestrian bridge and improvements on NE 65th Street and other improvements around the future light rail stations.

Patrick T: Inga had mentioned how NE 65th Street has improved conditions.

Sam F: The revenue impacts from COVID-19 was not on the levy property taxes but more on the local funding sources.

Inga M: I agree and we should include that as a concern for a future levy.

Sam F: The goal is to have a rough draft before the March meeting and we can review and approve it at the March meeting. We have guiding principles, successes and moving forward sections if others are interested in helping.

*LOC Operating Procedures*

Sam F: There's a committee operating procedures document from 2017 that Rachel M has organized.

Rachel M: It was adopted in 2017 by the committee. I have made some revisions to reflect the current work of the committee and subcommittees.

Sam F: We could send this out to everyone and we could discuss or approve it at the March meeting.

Rachel M: I'll send out the document to everyone.

Adjourn: 6:42 PM

**Action items**

Action items below capture tasks from previous meetings. Completed items will remain on action item tracker for one additional set of meeting minutes to capture “complete” status and will then be removed.

Action item	Meeting	Lead	Status	Deadline