

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, June 2, 2020 / 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Co-chairs: Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Ron Posthuma

Location: Video Conference

Members present on the phone: Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Ron Posthuma, Inga Manskopf, Joseph Laubach, Samuel Ferrara, Patrick Taylor, Alex Rouse, Kevin Werner, David Seater, Vicky Clarke, Nick Paranjpye, Hester Serebrin, Lisa Bogardus, Councilmember Alex Pederson

Members Absent: Todd Biesold, Ben Noble

Guests: Rachel McCaffrey, Lorelei Williams, Brian Sperry, David Conway, Kris Castleman, Joanna Valencia, Tracy Krawczyk, Ken Canete (all SDOT), Aaron Blumenthal (Council Budget Office), Elliot Helmbrecht (Mayor’s Office), Sean Cryan (member of public), Shaffer Bradford (member of public), Andrew Bell (member of public), Evan Phillips (member of public), Hisham Saredidine (member of public), Joanna Cullen (member of public)

MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 PM

Agenda item #1: Welcome and introductions

Ron P conducted a roll call for committee members, Rachel M introduced City staff, and then guests introduced themselves by stating their name and organization if applicable.

Agenda item #2: Levy prioritization methodology and draft factors

Lorelei W: We are anticipating the need to identify Levy projects and work that SDOT will not be able to deliver due to the forecasted reduction in City revenues and associated budget adjustments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to hear your feedback on [SDOT’s draft factors for prioritizing projects](#) that we shared with you.

Lisa B: Looking ahead to recovery, one of the goals is to get as many people back to work as quickly as possible. Is there a way to look at that factor in the prioritization?

Alex R: We do have specific feedback on SDOT’s draft prioritization factors to discuss. 15 people on the committee provided feedback on SDOT’s draft prioritization factors.

Ron P: Let’s go through the committee’s feedback on SDOT’s draft prioritization factors next.

Agenda item #3: Committee discussion and response to SDOT’s levy prioritization methodology and draft factors, and potential vote

Alex R: Nick and I solicited feedback from the committee on SDOT’s draft prioritization factors. The goal was to achieve a consensus, as much as possible, on the committee’s feedback on the draft factors. In general, SDOT’s approach looks good. Most committee members agreed with prioritization factors such

as project status, using each program's previous prioritization scoring, including an equity factor, and a funding factor. The committee has questions about how the past program's prioritization work was done, how weighting the various factors will be addressed, and what we are getting out of projects. Safety is a high priority of many committee members.

Many committee members commented that communication to voters should be clear. Other members commented that this should be a simple process to facilitate communication to the public. And that SDOT should consider a purpose driven prioritization approach to facilitate communications.

A number of committee members were unclear about the role the committee plays in non-Levy project prioritization like the West Seattle Bridge (WSB) project? Some committee members suggested focusing on delivering the Levy work. Other members suggested that since these are unprecedented times, and emerging priorities should be considered in SDOT's prioritization process.

Ron P: I suggest we confirm the comments on the draft factors that all committee members agree on.

Alex R: I'd like to discuss the WSB project and how it relates to Levy program funding.

Lorelei W: Levy dollars need to remain committed to the Levy program. It would take legislative changes to move Levy dollars to non-Levy work. The local dollars (i.e. commercial parking tax) is where we are seeing a reduction in Levy dollars. Also, there is a heightened need to use those same dollars for other needs.

Aaron B: That's correct. We wouldn't be able to redirect Levy funds without a citywide vote.

Nick P: What's the timeline for determining the WSB project funding? When will that picture be clearer?

Aaron B: We will have funding needs for the WSB project in 2020. And we will also have funding needs in future years. SDOT is working on these details now.

Alex R: Tonight, we should focus on how SDOT will prioritize the Levy program. Once SDOT knows more about the amount of funding that will remain in the Levy program, we can help inform SDOT's decisions about which projects to complete and which projects to cut from the Levy program.

Lorelei W: We don't have WSB project budget details yet. We have an engineer and contractor on board for stabilization repair work. And we are working to procure an engineering team to design a replacement structure in the event that is needed. In the next two months, we expect to have more clarity on whether or not we can repair the bridge and get traffic back on the bridge or if bridge replacement is needed. As we get farther into the 2021-2022 budget process this year, there should be more clarity on budget needs for the WSB project.

Nick P: Are there funding impacts to Levy projects this year?

Lorelei: Yes, we have Levy project funding impacts to local funds in 2020. We are going to pause a number of projects, which will give us the time needed to prioritize the Levy program.

Ron P: I suggest that Sam write the committee's feedback letter on SDOT's draft prioritization factors.

Alex R: I think all committee members agree that the project status is an important factor to include.

David S: Asked Lorelei if SDOT wants specific feedback on the prioritization factors?

Lorelei W: Yes, specific feedback and where things aren't clear will be helpful.

Alex R: Can members comment on whether any of SDOT's draft prioritization factors should be removed?

Lisa B: The factors Asset Preservation, Resilient Neighborhoods and Transportation/Transit Backbone are confusing.

Rachel B: I suggest that each committee member provide one or two specific comments on SDOT's draft prioritization factors.

Joe L: My two highest priority factors are C (project status) & F (grants and partnerships). Project status is really important because if we have started a project it makes sense to finish it to avoid financial losses. Grants and partnership funding are also very important as these projects give us the biggest bang for the buck.

Alex R: Joe, most committee members commented that these factors were important to consider as well as all the other factors SDOT provided. I suggest we discuss any additional factors that the committee suggests SDOT include in the Levy program prioritization process.

Hester S: Do existing metrics need to be updated to address the COVID-19 pandemic related travel pattern changes?

Patrick T: Vision Zero, Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), and SRTS evaluations are included in Section 7 of the Levy ordinance. Should we choose to include or ignore these evaluations in the prioritization process. The equity score factor is intended to address RSJI.

Lorelei W: We can provide more information about how equity is addressed in the program's prioritization processes.

Alex R: I think that would be helpful. There were questions about program prioritization outcomes relative to the equity score.

Lorelei W: An example is the bridge spot repair program, which completes about 300 spot repairs each year. Those repairs are based on maintenance needs and not where the work is located. On the other hand, the BMP program is delivering projects that expand the city's bicycle network. Therefore, equity is a key factor in their prioritization process.

David S: The three examples in SDOT's draft prioritization factors table didn't have scores for equity. I suggest that SDOT includes an equity score even if equity was addressed in the program's prioritization process.

Lorelei W: The programs don't all assess equity the same way.

Alex R: The committee had lots of questions about the Asset Preservation, Resilient Neighborhoods, and Transportation/Transit Backbone prioritization factors.

Lorelei W: It's a newer list that has developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes in travel patterns and community needs. Resilient Neighborhoods to align with SDOT's Stay Healthy Streets initiative and people staying closer to home more than they used to due to the pandemic. Asset Preservation to make sure we are maintaining existing infrastructure in a cost-effective way. And Transportation/Transit Backbone to facilitate access and mobility in response to the changing travel patterns and needs. We also recognize that the department's five core values may be more appropriate to consider than these three factors.

Hester S: Another consideration is how do existing metrics need to be updated to identify who is using the various travel modes post COVID-19?

Lorelei W: Those are all valid comments.

David S: It wasn't clear to me how these three factors would be used in the prioritization process but I liked these categorizations.

Lorelei W: At this time, we are not sure how we might use these factors in the prioritization process. We included these factors in the draft as we believe they are important issues to keep in mind as we go through the prioritization process.

Alex R: Do committee members have any additional factors for SDOT to consider including?

Sam F: Overall project size is an important factor.

Inga M: Transparency in communicating with the voters. We need to be ready to explain the factors and what they mean to voters.

Kevin W: A higher level of detail for the factors is needed to help the committee evaluate the factors and how they will be used in the prioritization process. For example, more detail on the program prioritization process, and factor G (Asset Preservation, Resilient Neighborhoods, and Transportation/Transit Backbone) is needed.

Vicky C: We could use more detail and some suggestions from SDOT on how the G factors could be used before we say as a committee, what we think about those factors.

Nick P: What are the consequences of delaying or postponing projects? That always costs money. Does the cost come out of the Levy budget? We need to make sure the prioritization is not too complicated. Maybe only have a few factors like safety and preservation of assets.

Councilmember Alex P: Just wanted you all to know that I'm here and listening to your feedback.

Rachel B: The most important factor is safety which relates to RSJI. We should prioritize projects that improve safety in underserved areas. Walking and biking projects are a great way to increase health and safety.

Ron P: Project status is pretty important. We should continue to advance projects that are ready to go to construction and pause projects that are in planning. I suggest that RSJI have a stand-alone score.

Sam F: I'll summarize what I have heard as the committee's most important prioritization factors:

- Project Status (larger projects close to construction higher priority over small projects)
- D (Program Prioritization), E (Equity), and G (Grant or Partnership dollars) are important but we'd like an apples to apples comparison. Clarity and consistency with these are needed. Pull out the RSJI score from D (Program Prioritization)
- Safety

Patrick T: I agree with SDOT's draft factors and I would add climate change.

David S: What is the city doing to look at new revenue sources to make up for these funding gaps? It's frustrating that the SPD is buying chemical weapons instead of investing in safety projects.

Councilmember Alex P: The payroll tax that Councilmembers Sawant and Morales have put forward is earmarked for the homeless, affordable housing, and converting homes from fossil fuel to clean energy. The homelessness crisis has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Any new progressive revenue sources like this one would likely to go towards homelessness. I'd like to renew a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) fund source for transportation and transit, bridge and other maintenance projects. There are other potential sources like tolling, gas taxes, and real estate developer impact fees. And there are ways to knit together other revenue sources for transportation needs.

Rachel B: Sam, do you have clear direction to prepare draft letter?

Sam F: Yes, I do.

Vicky C: There was a lot of great feedback in the survey that Sam can use in the letter.

Lorelei W: We need to make some quick decisions for 2020 projects to address the unforeseen revenue and budget challenges we are facing due to COVID-19. We are now evaluating which active projects it makes sense to pause to give us the time needed to go through the prioritization process for the Levy program. We will be sharing those details with you as they become available.

Aaron B: To address Hester's question, it would be difficult to make use of Levy funds for a loan so that's not a risk to Levy funds.

Agenda item #4: Committee business

- **Approval of meeting minutes**

Inga M: Moved to approve the May 5, 2020 minutes as drafted.

David S: Seconded the motion.

Ron P: Alright, the minutes are approved.

Agenda item #5: Upcoming agenda topics, announcements, and/or new business

Ron P: Is there other new business?

Joe L: We could discuss skipping or foregoing the 3rd round of NSF projects.

David S: We could discuss the committee's input to SDOT on the budget for the next 2 years.

Lisa B: Could Transportation Network Company (TNC) fees be used for Levy work?

Ron P: Do we want to move to approve the letter as described by Sam?

Vicky, Rachel B, Inga, Alex R: Each commented that they would like to see the letter before approving it.

Alex R: Committee feedback on the budget is due back to SDOT by June 30.

Ron P: Are the committee members OK with adding a comment about finding new revenue so cuts to the Levy program don't need to be so deep?

Nick P: Do new sources of money take a long time to get?

Ron P: Per Councilmember Pedersen, the city is going to look at a renewal of a Transportation Benefit District to cover some of the budget shortfalls.

Vicky C: Is this an opportunity to say that we are in support of a Transportation Benefit District renewal?

Ron P: Any new biz?

Public Comment:

None

Adjourn: 6:53 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
Send committee SDOT's draft levy prioritization criteria	May 5, 2020	SDOT		May 20
Summarize the construction cost of the 2020 TNC tax funded projects	February 4, 2020	SDOT		TBD