



# Racial Equity Toolkit

**DRAFT TRANSPORTATION LEVY PROPOSAL**

CO-COORDINATORS: ANNYA PINTAK, MAUREEN SHEEHAN, JOANNA VALENCIA

REVIEWED BY RSJI CHANGE TEAM

WITH SUPPORT FROM: DAN ANDERSON, KYLE BUTLER, BARBIE-DANIELLE  
DECARLO (RSJI ADVISOR), CHRIS GODWIN, CHRIS GREGORICH, MEGAN HOYT,  
MARGO IÑIGUEZ DAWES, BILL LABORDE, SERENA LEHMAN, CRAIG MOORE,  
EMILY REARDON, MEGHAN SHEPARD, & KATIE OLSEN

## RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT

### *A Tool to Help You Deepen Your Racial Equity Analysis During Each Phase of Planning*

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## Contents

General Information .....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
Step 1. Set Outcomes.....	5
1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable community outcomes related to the issue? .....	5
1b. Which racial equity opportunity area(s) will the issue primarily impact? .....	8
1c. Are there impacts on:.....	8
Step 2. Involve Stakeholders, Analyze Data.....	9
2a. Are there impacts on geographic areas? .....	9
2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue? .....	9
2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders? .....	11
2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people’s lives and should be taken into consideration? .....	31
2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities? .....	35
Step 3. Determine Benefit and/or Burden.....	37
3a. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity? .....	37
3b. What benefits to the impacted community/demographic may result?.....	39
3c. What are potential unintended consequences (both negative and positive potential impact)? .....	40
3d. Are the impacts aligned with your department’s community outcomes that were defined in Step 1?.....	41
Step 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm.....	43
4. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity? .....	43
Step 5. Evaluate, Raise Racial Awareness, Be Accountable .....	53
5a. How will you evaluate and be accountable? .....	53
5b. What is unresolved? .....	55
Step 6. Report Back.....	56

## General Information

Title of policy, initiative, program, budget issue: Seattle Transportation Levy Proposal

Description: This Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) focuses on Mayor Harrell’s transportation levy proposal to replace the 2015 voter-approved Levy to Move Seattle. The levy proposal is a time sensitive document to be considered by the City Council in May, June and July for the November 2024 ballot.

SDOT has used property-tax levies to fund transportation improvements since 2007 and the current levy historically represents about 30 percent of the city’s transportation funding. As the single-largest source of transportation funding, the levy presents a significant opportunity to advance the department’s equity goals.

With direction from the Mayor’s Office and City Budget Office (CBO), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) proposed the transportation levy proposal to continue funding improvements to public streets, bridges, sidewalks, traffic signals, and more, while directing investments to current and historically underinvested communities.

The levy proposal is based on an extensive inclusive public engagement process conducted for the development of the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP). If approved, implementation of the levy would continue to rely on in-depth community engagement, and incorporation of equity considerations into program and program prioritization.

This RET documents, reviews and reflects on the equity practices and processes SDOT staff considered in the development of the transportation levy proposal.

Department: SDOT

Contact Name: Meghan Shepard, Interim Funding Plan Director

Contact Email: Meghan.shepard@seattle.gov

Type (Policy, Initiative, Program, or Budget Issue): Budget issue (new major funding source)

## Executive Summary

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) has been in place since 2004 and was codified into law in 2023. It is the backbone of the City's commitment to eliminating racial disparities and achieving racial equity in Seattle.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income communities, as well as seniors and people with disabilities continue to carry an outsized burden related to transportation that contributes to social and physical harm, including disproportionate rates of illness, death, social isolation and poverty. We are dedicated to reconciling our history of systemic racism and exclusionary planning in our transportation system, and this levy proposal reflects that dedication in alignment with the city's Race and Social Justice Initiative.

Addressing transportation inequities helps reduce disproportionate rates of illness, death, social isolation, and poverty; long-term impacts of pollution; and limited access to opportunities and wealth. Transportation is essential to access key services like jobs, education, healthcare, community, and entertainment. Levy investments provide access to opportunity and benefit people within and beyond districts.

The RET for the transportation levy proposal is grounded in three pieces: outreach and planning done in drafting the **Seattle Transportation Plan (STP)**, through the lens of the **Transportation Equity Framework (TEF)** and **equitable implementation**. We recognize the city is constantly changing and SDOT's equity journey will continue to evolve over the life of the levy, thus the RET analysis is a dynamic document, adaptable and iterative. It's a reliable resource our staff can constantly turn to.

### **Seattle Transportation Plan input into the Levy Proposal**

The STP developed key equity goals and moves informed through an intentional community engagement process that then guided the levy proposal development, thereby ensuring that the levy proposal is firmly rooted in community priorities.

Equity Key Moves from the Seattle Transportation Plan that guide the proposal include:

- Center voices of communities of color and underrepresented groups in planning and decision-making processes
- Address inequities in the transportation system by prioritizing investments for impacted communities
- Remove cost as a barrier so everyone can take the trips they need to make
- Support shifts toward non-punitive transportation enforcement approaches that reduce harm and enhance public safety on city streets

### **Transportation Equity Framework**

As part of our RET process, we engaged in a yearlong engagement with members of the Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW). The TEW is made up of a broad and diverse set of community members tasked with identifying actions that address transportation challenges. Their contributions have been instrumental in establishing a set of values and strategies for the TEF, laying the foundation for SDOT actions for years to come.

TEF tactics have significantly influenced the selection of projects and programs for funding. Our team identified and implemented 16 TEF tactics into the RET process enhancing our service delivery areas. These tactics, among others, are set to propel the levy's potential implementation, shaping how projects and programs materialize.

### **Equitable Implementation**

Through implementation of TEF Tactic 18.3, related to inclusion of a participatory budgeting component in the levy proposal based on learnings from the Your Voice Your Choice and Neighborhood Street Fund programs that meets the needs of BIPOC and vulnerable communities, our engagement with the TEW and SDOT subject matter experts (SME) throughout 2023 culminated in a levy proposal that includes investments for programs that enables SDOT to co-create projects with the community, centering intentional relationship building and inviting communities into our decision-making process.

The City's Race and Social Equity Index would guide City resources to underinvested communities, by identifying areas of the city where residents are:

- People of color, English language learners, and foreign-born
- People with lower income and educational attainment
- Adults with disability, disease, and health disadvantages

Our collective RET analysis, process and practice informed key aspects of the proposal including project identification, equitable engagement, People Streets Public Spaces, Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program and other selections within programs, all of which are rooted in the current Levy to Move Seattle's equity work plan.

As informed by the RET, the levy proposal would equip SDOT with the resources to respond to the needs of historically underinvested communities, focus investments in areas of high equity priority, and foster the growth of our day-to-day organizational equity practice.

## Step 1. Set Outcomes

### 1a. What does your department define as the most important racially equitable community outcomes related to the issue?

Since the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) is a foundational input for the draft transportation levy proposal, the equity goal, key moves and outcomes listed in the STP are our department's north star in defining the most important racially equitable community outcome for levy investments.

Equity is reflected in the Vision statement for the STP and is a result of a yearlong conversation with people throughout Seattle. This community engagement included the prioritization of ensuring voices of communities not traditionally heard from are included, particularly underrepresented people who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC); people who are LGBTQ+, intersex, or asexual; people living in poverty; immigrant and refugee communities and people who do not speak English at home; young people; older adults; and people with disabilities.

The STP Vision statement is as follows:

Seattle is an equitable, vibrant, and diverse city where moving around is safe, fair, and sustainable. All people and businesses can access their daily needs and feel connected to their community.

Equity is one of the six goals in the STP:

Co-create with community and implement restorative practices to address transportation-related inequities.

This goal is supported by "Key Moves" we'll make, or the strategies that will be most impactful toward making the STP vision and goals a reality. For each key move, the plan identifies a menu of tools and actions we'll use to support progress, maintaining our tried-and-true strategies while also investing in new approaches to further align with community goals and expectations.

Equity Key Moves include:

- **TJ1:** Center the voices of communities of color and underrepresented groups in planning and decision-making processes
- **TJ2:** Address inequities in the transportation system by prioritizing investments for impacted communities
- **TJ3:** Remove cost as a barrier so everyone can take the trips they need to make
- **TJ4:** Support shifts toward non-punitive transportation enforcement approaches that reduce harm and enhance public safety on city streets

Equity tools and actions are listed for the four key moves above. The 32 tools/actions support many Transportation Equity Framework (TEF) tactics, details of which are available in the STP document.

It is worth noting that equity is crosscutting, and overlaps with other goals, key moves, and actions of the plan. Other goals of the STP includes:

- **Safety:** Prioritize safety for travelers in Seattle, with no serious injury or fatal crashes
- **Sustainability:** Respond to climate change through innovation and a lens of climate justice

- **Mobility & Economic Vitality:** Provide reliable and affordable travel options that help people and goods get where they need to go
- **Livability:** Reimagine city streets as inviting places to linger and play
- **Maintenance & Modernization:** Improve city transportation infrastructure and ready it for the future

As the STP was developed and community voices were analyzed, various staff worked together to ensure consistent incorporation of equity in all parts of the document. Specific outcomes from the STP that contributes to a foundation for the racially equitable community outcomes in our levy proposal include:

- Zero traffic-related fatalities by 2030
- Zero traffic-related serious injuries by 2030
- Net zero emissions from vehicle trips by 2050
- 63% of all trips by walk, bike, transit by 2044
- Below 15% of household income dedicated to transportation
- Individual asset condition trends and targets to be set based on forthcoming Transportation Asset Management Plan

These STP equity outcomes guided our levy proposal with the following direction for setting our racially equitable community outcomes:

- Levy investments are equitably allocated to serve communities in highest need for transportation access and distributed in high equity priority areas.
- More travel options, better connections to neighborhoods, giving the same density of transportation facilities so that all these programs are doing activities that lead to those STP equity outcomes.
- Reconsider and redesign internal processes to facilitate equitable outcomes, more travel options better connections to neighborhoods, giving the same density of transportation facilities programs are doing activities that lead to those STP equity outcomes.

The racially equitable community outcomes we have set for transportation levy proposal are the following\*:

- **Vision Zero, School & Neighborhood Safety**
  - Responsive safety projects at up to 40 high-collision locations
  - Safety redesign projects on 12 or more corridors in the High Injury Network
  - 16 co-created projects with community in historically underinvested neighborhoods
- **Street Maintenance & Modernization**
  - Paving on 38% of the busiest blocks where streets are in poor condition.
  - Paving on approximately 15 corridors, with improvements for all modes
- **Bridges & Structures**
  - Preventative maintenance program for the City's 134 bridges on optimal treatment schedules.
- **Transit Corridors & Connections**
  - Improvements on up to 4 streets with high-ridership bus routes in equity priority areas

- 160 projects to improve bus reliability, safety, and access with a focus on transit performance “pinch points”
- **Pedestrian Safety**
  - Contributions to 10,000 new accessible curb ramps
- **Bicycle Safety**
  - New and upgraded bikeways in equity priority areas
- **People Streets & Public Spaces**
  - Co-design, build, and maintain projects with business districts and community organizations, including street redesigns, seating, wayfinding, activation, and lighting at transit plazas
- **Climate & Resiliency**
  - Partnerships with up to 3 neighborhoods on low-pollution pilot projects
  - 3-to-1 tree replacement, per the Mayor’s One Seattle Tree Plan Executive Order

*\*These outcomes reflect point in time (April 2024) from the levy proposal prior to City Council deliberations.*



1b. Which racial equity opportunity area(s) will the issue primarily impact?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education             | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Justice |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Development | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jobs  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health                | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment           |   |

1c. Are there impacts on:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contracting Equity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immigrant and Refugee Access to Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce Equity   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement |

Please describe:

As the transportation levy has historically represented about 30% of the city's transportation funding, the draft transportation levy proposal affects nearly every aspect of SDOT's delivery of transportation services and projects. The levy has the potential to significantly impact SDOT and city goals to address race and social justice and align with Mayor Bruce Harrell [Executive Order 2022-07 One Seattle Climate Justice Actions to Reduce Emissions from the Transportation Sector](#). A few issues related to racial equity opportunity areas include:

- Health benefit: Building and repairing sidewalks, crossings, and curb ramps so people walking and rolling can safely get to where they need to go, especially in equity areas where environmental injustices have resulted in higher rates of health implications due to transportation emissions. Keeping our busiest bus routes moving reliably with transit-only lanes and special signals at busy intersections, and provide lighting, access, and public space improvements.
- Jobs/housing benefit: Connecting people safely to transit hubs, including Link light rail stations; improving bus stops; and reducing delays on bus routes. Building new sidewalks to make accessible walking and rolling connections to the bus and train, schools and jobs, and neighborhood destinations.
- Environment benefit: Addressing climate change directly, reducing air pollution and making sustainable transportation options more available. Planting trees in neighborhoods that historically have had less investment in tree planting and care. Launching strategies for low-pollution neighborhoods, including low-emissions goods delivery in areas most impacted by climate change and pollution.
- Contracting: The levy proposal would include contracting equity goals with a target of 20% for purchasing and 24% for consulting contract dollars that will go to WMBE. Levy funds would result in additional contracting opportunities for WMBE businesses. One intended outcome of the levy proposal is to direct investments to currently and historically underinvested communities, including immigrant and refugee communities.

## Step 2. Involve Stakeholders, Analyze Data

### 2a. Are there impacts on geographic areas?

Yes  No

Check all neighborhoods that apply (*see map*):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Seattle Neighborhoods <input type="checkbox"/> Ballard <input type="checkbox"/> North <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input type="checkbox"/> Central	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake Union <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest <input type="checkbox"/> Southeast <input type="checkbox"/> Delridge <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Duwamish	<input type="checkbox"/> East District <input type="checkbox"/> King County (outside Seattle) <input type="checkbox"/> Outside King County Please Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.
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### 2b. What are the racial demographics of those living in the area or impacted by the issue?

The 2020 Census was used to analyze racial demographics in Seattle. Notably, the validity of the 2020 Census is questionable due to the pandemic and concerns about response rates because of questions on citizenship and immigration status (Bahrapour et al, 2021). However, the Census still represents the most accurate tool to evaluate demographic changes in Seattle.

The majority of Seattle’s population identifies as white and about 41% of Seattle’s population identifies as a person of color. Figure 1 below demonstrates the percentage of people of color in Seattle is higher than in past Census years. Another difference compared to past years is that while the percentage of Black residents has decreased for the past three Censuses, the percentages of people of Hispanic origin and people of two or more races have increased. Consistently, people of Asian descent have represented the second largest racial group in Seattle and the largest non-white racial group.

As seen in Figure 2 below, certain neighborhoods are more diverse than others. The largest percentage of people of color reside in southeast and southwest Seattle, particularly SODO, Beacon Hill, Rainier Beach, Delridge, and South Park. Some neighborhoods in North and Central Seattle, including Haller Lake, Northgate, Sand Point, University District, and Central District also include higher percentages of people of color. Alternatively, neighborhoods near the water, such as Ballard, Magnolia, Alki, Montlake, Madison Park, and Broadview, are predominantly white.

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>% POC</i>	<i>% Asian</i>	<i>% Black</i>	<i>% Hispanic</i>	<i>%Multiracial</i>
2000	32	13	8.4	5.3	4.5
2010	34	14	8.0	7.0	5.0
2020	41	17	7.0	8.0	7.0

Figure 1: Percentages of POC Residents throughout Seattle (Data Source: 2020 Census)

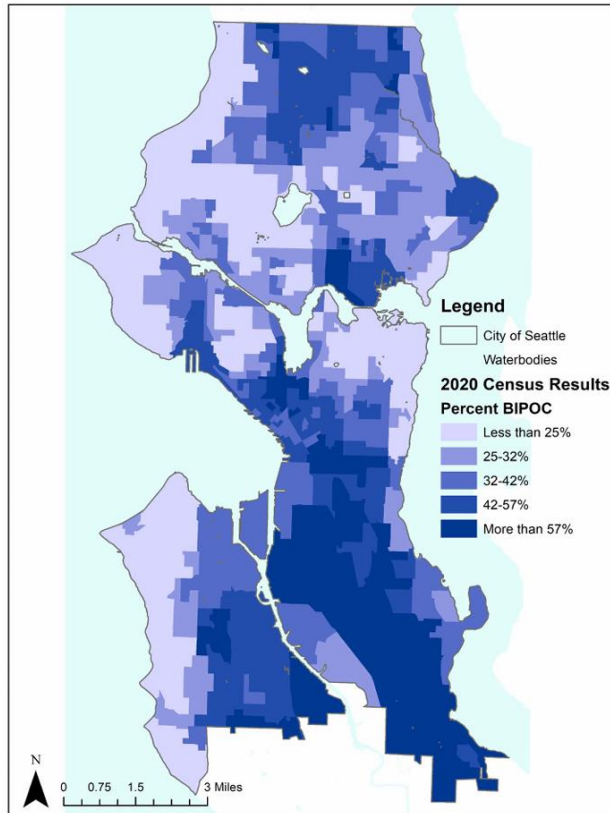


Figure 2: 2020 Census Results Percent BIPOC (Source: Seattle Transit Measure RET)

As seen in Figure 3 below, Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) RSE Index and Community Reporting Areas (CRA), further illustrates neighborhoods in South, Southeast, Southwest, Central Area, University District, and sections of North Seattle as having highest and second highest equity priority areas. Zooming out by council districts, Council District 1, 2, 5 have large sections of their district with high and second highest equity priority areas, and Council Districts 3, 4, and 7 have some high and second highest priority areas predominantly in the south sections of their district.

OPCD provided guidance on the definition of Neighborhoods versus CRAs. The concepts of neighborhoods are complex in the eyes of the City of Seattle government as the City does not have a universal administrative definition of what they mean, what powers lie with neighborhoods, or even what their boundaries are (in comparison to other cities like Atlanta). Thus, OPCD has been using CRA as approximations of neighborhoods at the census-tract level – which is an effective way of getting and presenting data from the Census Bureau.

# Racial Equity Toolkit: Draft Transportation Levy Proposal

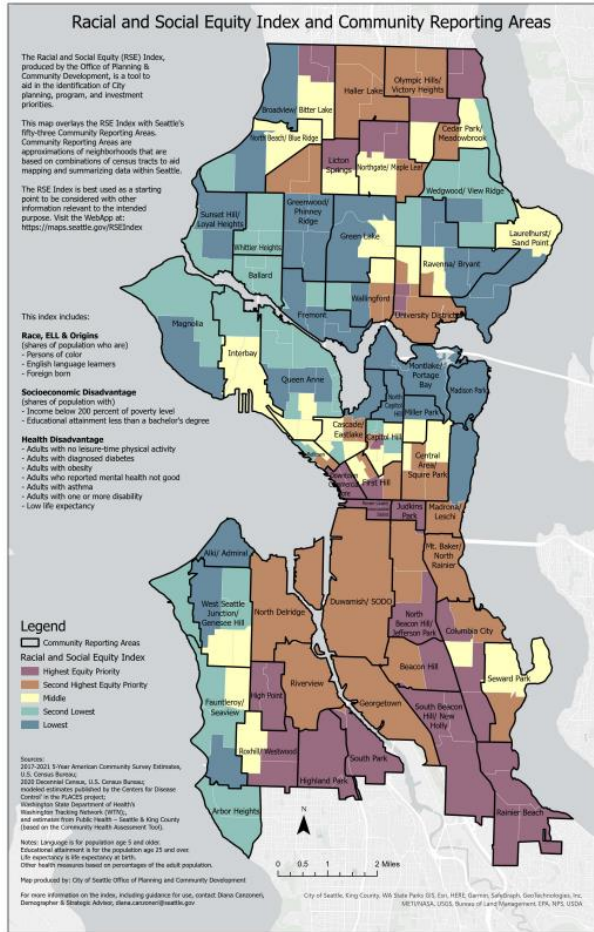


Figure 3: Race and Social Equity Index and Community Reporting Areas (Source: Office of Planning & Community Development)

## 2c. How have you involved community members and stakeholders?

**RET TIP:** Effective ways to include community members and stakeholders include, but are not limited to, initiating or attending community meetings, focus groups, City Commissions and Advisory Board meetings, and Change Team meetings to gather community input. Example: If your plans result in a reduction of hours at a community center, include conversations with those who use the community center as well as staff who work there; or if your plans implement a new penalty fee, survey/consult with the population and demographic of people at risk of negative impact to learn the best way to minimize the negative impact.

Community members and stakeholders have been providing input into the transportation levy indirectly throughout the duration of the Levy to Move Seattle as well as the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP), a community-informed 20-year vision for transportation in the city.

- Seattle Transportation Plan engagement
- Internal staff engagement
- Project and program scoring
- LMS and Levy Oversight Committee
- Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW) & SDOT staff collaboration

## Racial Equity Toolkit: Draft Transportation Levy Proposal

- Polling & focus groups
- DON Community Liaison (CL) focus groups
- External Stakeholder Engagement

### STP Engagement Informing Levy Proposal Development

The STP is one of several pivotal efforts shaping Seattle’s transportation system for the next decade and beyond serving as the cornerstone for the Transportation Levy Proposal as well as informing longer-term funding strategies. The vision, goals, key moves, actions, projects, and programs list are inputs to the levy development process and has provided information to develop prioritization frameworks rooted in goals, and inform a tiered project list, and program concepts.

Alignment between the STP and the Levy Proposal can be seen in the STP project list and the Major Street Maintenance & Modernization projects. All projects on the Major Street Maintenance & Modernization projects are either Tier 1 or 2 STP projects, meaning projects included in the levy are those we hear community had a strong desire for.

One program out of the STP that has informed the Levy Proposal is “People Street and Public Spaces.” These are places where we can make improvements to encourage people to gather, play, rest, walk, roll, and connect, including routes to schools, parks, and transit. We also plan to a collaborative planning approach that uplifts community priorities to identify opportunities for People Streets and Public Spaces in their neighborhoods.

The STP engagement approach was designed so people can participate at any point in the process, know how to provide feedback, understand how it is used in the STP, and have confidence their voices will be heard.

To create the STP, SDOT sought to include voices of all types of community members, with the belief that everyone’s voice should be heard. This began with a commitment to listening, meeting people across the city where they are, and working to address the needs of those who have historically been left out of planning processes and decision-making about the city’s transportation system. We built upon traditional public engagement tools. We partnered with and compensated community-based organizations (CBOs) and Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Community Liaisons (CLs) with existing relationships in communities to listen and create a plan that reflects the values and needs of everyone. These organizations and individuals helped us create a plan that advances the goal of a racially equitable and socially just transportation system. Engagement with community was continuously adjusted during the STP process to create a seat at the table for everyone, alongside communities and organizations already familiar with city planning processes.

A variety of digital and printed tools were used to build awareness and spread the word. Many of these materials were transcreated into 16 different languages. Additionally, there were opportunities to learn about the STP from other local media sources, such as blog posts and social media.

You can learn more about the STP, including the public outreach and engagement process, [here](#).

### Internal Staff Engagement

The Funding Plan Management Team (Management Team) was established at the onset of the Funding Plan development. The Management Team was an interdepartmental group of subject matter experts

that led a subcommittee on their subject area.

Subcommittee	Staff Lead
<b>Program Management</b>	Meghan Shepard & Emily Reardon
<b>Funding &amp; Finance</b>	Chris Godwin & Kyle Butler
<b>Project Development</b>	Serena Lehman & Megan Hoyt
<b>External Engagement</b>	Dan Anderson
<b>Internal Engagement</b>	Katie Olsen
<b>Council Engagement</b>	Bill LaBorde
<b>Participatory Budgeting</b>	Katie Olsen & Annya Pintak
<b>STP</b>	Joanna Valencia
<b>Plan Alignment</b>	Maureen Sheehan & Meghan Shepard
<b>Prioritization</b>	Craig Moore
<b>Transportation Equity Workgroup</b>	Annya Pintak

At the start of the Funding Plan process, we began by interviewing **Division Directors** one on one to better understand where our current funding structure is falling short, what is working well, where we need to focus our investments, and what systemic corrections need to be made. We continued to keep Division Directors informed of our progress through Senior Team, a joint Executive Steering Committee shared with the STP, and ad hoc one-on-ones.

To keep staff across the department informed on the development of the Funding Plan, the **Core Team** was created and met every two weeks to receive updates, give feedback, and enlisted for help in collecting or distributing key information. Core Team members are below:

Division	Staff Member
<b>Policy &amp; Planning</b>	Aditi Kambuj, Joanna Valencia*
<b>Roadway Structures</b>	Kit Loo
<b>Project Development</b>	Monica DeWald
<b>Capital Projects</b>	Joanna Hankamer
<b>Transportation Operations</b>	Matt Beaulieu
<b>Pavement, Signs, Markings</b>	Benjamin Hansen
<b>Right of Way Urban Forestry</b>	Joe Markovich
<b>Transit &amp; Mobility</b>	Maria Koengeter
<b>Office of the Waterfront</b>	Kyle Butler
<b>Director's Office</b>	Chris Gregorich*, Bill LaBorde*
<b>Street Use</b>	Craig Moore*, Maureen Sheehan*, Meghan Shepard*
<b>Equity &amp; Communications</b>	Katie Olsen*, Annya Pintak*
<b>FAD</b>	Chad Allen, Chris Godwin*, Frances Hernandez, Serena Lehman*

\*Funding Plan Management Team Member

We engaged staff across the department on the expiring levy and levy proposal who typically do not work at Seattle Municipal Tower (SMT) or the Bank of America (BOA) building and are working on site, specifically crews.

Much of the work to develop the levy proposal and share information was completed within office spaces rather than crew facilities, and was completed using email, Microsoft Teams meetings, and in-person meetings in these offices. Crews also offer a unique perspective of on the ground experience and can offer insights those who work in the office may not be aware of.

Therefore, it was important to ensure we heard perspectives and intentionally engaged with staff who don't perform their work duties in these spaces. Additionally, as shown in the table below, staff who work at SDOT's crew facilities are mostly (more than 50%) non-white.

Work Location	% of Employees at Work Location Who are White (locations <50% highlighted)
BALLARD BRIDGE (BLB)	67%
<b>BANK OF AMERICA FIFTH AVENUE PLAZA (BOA)</b>	54%
CHARLES ST - COMPLEX (CHS)	25%
CHARLES ST - TRAFFIC-METER (CHT)	12%
ENGINEERING INVENTORY WAREHOUSE (EIW)	42%
ENGINEERING TRAFFIC SHOP (ETS)	56%
FREMONT BRIDGE (FRB)	69%
HALLER LAKE SHOPS (HLS)	41%
POLSON BUILDING (PLB)	100%
SDOT-West Seattle	68%
<b>SEATTLE MUNICIPAL TOWER (SMT)</b>	52%
SPOKANE STREET BRIDGE WEST (SBW)	100%
SUNNY JIM WAREHOUSE (SJW)	45%
UNIVERSITY BRIDGE (UBR)	67%

SDOT prioritized crew engagement and attended multiple all-staff meetings: Right-of-Way Maintenance and Urban Forestry (ROWUF), Public Space Management (PSM), Roadway Structures, and the Transportation Operations Division (TOD) Safety. We held learning tables with options to join in person and via Teams and offered for staff to use a speed type to charge their time engaging in these opportunities. The learning tables were intentionally held outside the lunch hour for this reason, and we provided a speed type for charging time at the events to be responsive to feedback from supervisors' regarding making sure these opportunities are accessible to a wide range of staff. In addition, we published monthly newsletter updates in the Best of the Week.

The biggest takeaway we received from engaging with staff was a need for increased investment in maintenance and modernization, including our bridges. Other takeaways we heard from internal SDOT staff included the following:

- Tracking levy deliverables and outcomes is challenging.
- It is important for people on the street to know that the work crews are doing is funded by the levy; implement more signage and provide talking points to staff.
- Interest in how the cost to the average homeowner compares levy to levy.
- Interest and enthusiasm in doing more work; crews wish they could work more so they could repair more sidewalks, plant more trees, etc.
- SDOT crews see a need for more bridge investment.
- Interest in how equity outcomes are being considered and incorporated.
- Interest in how STP stakeholder engagement is being continued and incorporated.
- Interest in measuring and evaluating outcomes.



## Project and Program Scoring

As an early step in the levy proposal development, we scored existing as well as new/proposed projects and programs on their alignment with our department values and other key factors.

### Development of the scoring framework

Our scoring rubric was one input of many in the development of the draft levy proposal. The rubric tool was developed by a team of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to prioritize both large capital projects and our programs. The SMEs are representatives within SDOT to ensure we are getting broad representation and expertise from across the department. The concept was to create a rubric that could be applied across the board to all SDOT work. They were actively involved in developing and revising the rubrics, validating the scores, and educating Funding Plan staff and Project and Program managers on their respective metric/s.

The core of this framework is grounded in our Seattle Transportation Plan core values of Equity, Safety, Sustainability, Mobility, Excellence, Livability. Additionally, the team determined there were significant factors beyond our core values that impacted the value and priority of capital projects and programs. These factors include density of the location where the work happens (to support the growth that is happening in these areas), specific legal requirements, political priorities, department priorities, COOP (continuity of operations plan – SDOT’s emergency response plan) support, grant fitness, partner project support, requests from the community, and maintenance necessity from a risk mitigation standpoint. Ideally all measures of the rubric could be objectively applied using quantitative measures but for certain measures there was no feasible way to apply an objective measure so subjective measures were devised with clear guidelines and examples. When possible, we used existing metrics that were already being used in the department. Some, such as the Race and Social Equity Composite Index, a composite of multiple factors associated with equity, are widely used by multiple groups for prioritization.

**Quantitative Measures:** Equity, safety, sustainability, mobility, excellence, livability, and density. Most of the quantitative measures use geospatial tools to generate a score based on project locations. For programs, most of which don’t have specific location data, a descriptive qualitative rubric that aligns as close as possible with the quantitative measure was devised.

**Qualitative Measures:** Legal requirements, political priorities, department priorities, COOP (continuity of operations plan) support, grant fitness, partner project support, community requests, necessary for existing asset.

Measure	SME(s)
Equity	Margo Iñiguez Dawes, Anya Pintak, Serena Lehman
Safety	Venu Nemani, James Le
Mobility	Joanna Valencia, Maria Koengeter, Jen Malley-Crawford, David Burgess, Mike Boonsripisal, Laura Wojcicki
Sustainability	Ben Rosenblatt, Radcliffe Dacanay, Michelle Abunaja, Edie Gilliss, Sarah Strand
Livability	Aditi Kambuj, Joel Miller, Ian Macek



<b>Excellence</b>	Chad Allen, Elsa Tibbits, Katherine Midkiff, Ramandeep Josen
<b>Density</b>	Craig Moore, Maureen Sheehan
<b>Legal Requirements</b>	Darby DuComb, Salma Siddick, Matt Beaulieu
<b>Political Priorities</b>	Bill LaBorde, Chris Gregorich
<b>Department Priorities</b>	Emily Reardon, Craig Moore, Maureen Sheehan
<b>COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) Support</b>	Patti Quirk, Reiner Blanco, Trevor Partap
<b>Grant Fitness</b>	Jim Storment, Sarah Strand
<b>Partner Projects to Support</b>	Jon Layzer, Candida Lorenzana, Joanna Hankamer
<b>Community Request/Identified in STP</b>	Joanna Valencia, Lizzie Moll
<b>Necessary for Existing Asset</b>	Chad Allen, Elsa Tibbits, Ramandeep Josen, Frances Hernandez

### Framework Application

Quantitative measures were processed as a batch using GIS tools. Qualitative measures and all program measures were scored by the program/project managers/owners, then validated by specific SMEs for each measure. The process is designed to be updated on a regular basis, can be updated with new and improved factors as they are built, and align with One Seattle growth strategy.

Many metrics use multiple components to more fully capture the complexity of inputs that contribute to desired outcomes connected to a metric. For many metrics we iterated through multiple versions of the metric until landing on a formula that resulted in a ranked project list for that measure that made sense to the SMEs. All metrics were normalized on a 1 to 5 scale for simplicity of scoring. Qualitative rubric often includes guidance on what is required to get a specific score. Additionally, many qualitative metrics include examples of programs for specific scores. For some metrics a binary score of 1 or 5 was deemed most appropriate based on SME feedback. Values could be weighted but are currently given equal weight.

The project list and associated scores are saved in a SharePoint list. The idea is that this list will continue to be updated as new projects are conceived and scores will be updated as inputs such as political priorities change. Ultimately this list could feed or morph into SDOT’s Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) that outlines the department’s 12 capital investment priorities. Additionally, the list includes all the capital projects proposed by STP, which becomes the core of the City of Seattle’s updated Comprehensive Plan transportation project list.

A fundamental difference between capital projects and programs is capital projects have defined locations, which make applying quantitative measures using GIS tools relatively easy. Programs generally don’t have well defined locations for where they will work or when they do, such as from a defined work plan, they don’t look out much past one year. Thus, it is not possible to quantitatively evaluate any of the measures for programs for the 8-year duration of proposed levy funding using GIS tools. As a result, qualitative measures corresponding to the quantitative measures used for capital projects were applied

to programs using rubrics devised by the associated subject matter experts. These rubrics align as close as possible to what the corresponding quantitative measures tell us about capital projects. By nature, the qualitative measures are more subjective than the corresponding quantitative measures. As a result, there is more potential for bias introduced by the scorer. This is mitigated as much as possible by the subject matter expert review of the resulting scores for the qualitative measures for programs.

### **Learnings of the scoring process and what came from the scores**

This is a labor-intensive process, particularly when taken on as a bulk effort, as was the case before the levy proposal, because no one person had the knowledge to score all the projects. Thus, project owners and managers were recruited to do the scoring. This brought many perspectives to the table but also resulted in cases of score inflation and bias, which made the SME review even more important for removing specific project bias introduced by many scorers.

As an example, the qualitative equity rubric for scoring programs had 3 components—use of an equity-related data layer, distribution of investments, and degree of engagement with impacted stakeholders—and program owners appreciated the opportunity to discuss the application of the rubric directly with the equity SMEs.

There is no cost component to the scores and cost ended up being a much bigger factor in whether a project moved forward than its score. Including cost information would allow for a “value” score to be generated, which would be useful in the cost-constrained funding environment SDOT works in. The challenge with including cost information is that most of the projects being scored are defined at the most minimal level so providing anything close to precise costs would add a significant amount of work.

Specific to the equity score, the equity SME found that program owners appreciated an opportunity to engage directly on what equity score their program should receive. It's hard to fairly score programs on how they center/advance equity when we haven't given them consistent goals or frameworks for doing so – that presents an opportunity for us to develop some more consistent goals/frameworks in the next levy, so that future scoring of projects and programs on how well they center/advance equity is transparent.

Scores were just one factor in selecting signature capital projects for the levy proposal. Other factors included a desire to have equitable distribution of levy funded projects so all Council districts benefit from levy projects, directly or indirectly, the need to address specific maintenance needs within this levy, and available funding, which was the most significant constraint on what projects were selected.



Figure 4: Major Street Maintenance & Modernization Candidate Projects (Source: Transportation Levy Proposal, April 2024)

### Levy to Move Seattle (LMS) and Levy Oversight Committee (LOC)

Approved by voters in November 2015, the 9-year, \$930 million Levy to Move Seattle (LMS) provides funding through December 31, 2024, to improve safety for all travelers, maintain our streets and bridges, and invest in reliable, affordable travel options for a growing city. The Levy aimed to take care of the basics, while also investing in the future with improvements to move more people and goods in and around a growing Seattle. The Levy replaced the 9-year \$365 million Bridging the Gap levy approved by voters in 2006.

Key to the LMS is the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC). The LOC is composed of 16 members, including a City Councilmember and a City Budget Office (CBO) representative. The other 14 members are Seattle residents appointed by the Mayor and City Council. Per the 2015 Levy Ordinance, the LOC is tasked with:

- Monitoring LMS revenues, expenditures, and program and project implementation.
- Advising the City Council, the Mayor, and SDOT on responding to program and project cost savings or overruns.
- Reviewing SDOT’s program and project priorities and financial plans, and it makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding the spending of Levy proceeds.

The LOC was tasked with providing a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council regarding the advisability of proposing to voters a replacement transportation levy. To prepare the LOC for this task, SDOT worked together to coordinate presentations to the LOC about Levy-funded programs and continued to prepare quarterly and annual Levy reports.

In Spring 2023 the LOC submitted a letter recommending a future transportation levy and included a variety of key insights on the LMS and suggestions for a future levy.

SDOT also briefed the other transportation boards and committees – the Pedestrian, Freight, Bicycle, and Transit Advisory Boards, as well as the School Traffic Safety Committee – about the levy proposal. The transportation modal boards each have a representative on the LOC, and in this way modal board perspectives have also been incorporated and respected in the process of developing the levy proposal.

### 2023 Levy Oversight Committee Coordination by the numbers



**10**

Full committee meetings



**9**

Individual program presentations



**5**

Reports prepared and presented



**5**

New committee members

### Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW) & SDOT Staff Collaboration

Elevating community voices not traditionally invited into the conversation about transportation policy and operations is a critical need. From 2019-2022, SDOT committed resources and collaborated with members of SDOT’s Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW) to co-develop the department’s first-ever

Transportation Equity Framework (TEF) and its implementation plan. To this day, SDOT continues to resource the TEW and the group has shifted its charge to act as community stewards of the TEF and regularly collaborates with SDOT on implementing TEF tactics aligned with their annual workplan topics.

The TEW is a group of 7-11 community members with lived experiences and community connections with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and vulnerable communities. Each TEW member is affiliated with a local Seattle-King County organization ranging from housing agencies, social service organizations, neighborhood collectives, immigrant organizations and young adult mentorship programs. The majority of the TEW members when first joining the group are not familiar with SDOT's lines of business and are engaging in policy development for the first time.

The TEW identified the STP and the Funding Plan, including the Levy Proposal, as a priority topic the group wanted to include in their 2023 and 2024 workplan. Staff were responsive to the group's request and collaborated with the TEW and a group of SDOT SMEs staff to implement **TEF Value: Decision-Making, Transparency and Accountability, Tactic 18.3:**

*Include a participatory budgeting process in the development of the next transportation funding package, include elements of the Transportation Equity Framework, take learnings from Your Voice, Your Choice and Neighborhood Street Fund\* and meets the priorities of BIPOC and vulnerable communities.*

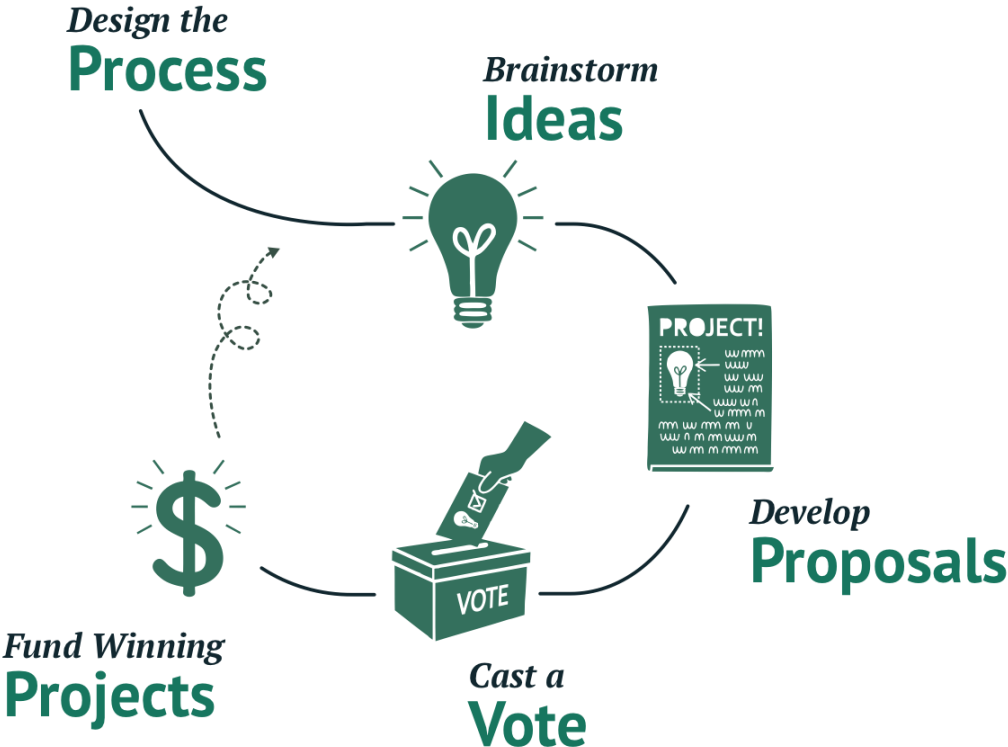


Figure 5: Steps in Participatory Budgeting (Source: Participatory Budgeting Project)

Principles and practices of Participatory Budgeting (PB) include the following:

- Engage residents in directly deciding how to spend a portion of public budget.
- Redirect resources to those with the greatest needs.
- Build trust and accountability in local government.

The model established by **Your Voice, Your Choice (YVYC)** has served as a launching pad for the City to explore other large- and small-scale PB programs that share power with those generally left out of planning conversations and marginalized in the budgetary process. The YVYC: Parks & Streets Program is a partnership between SDOT and Parks & Recreation to identify and invest in small park and street improvement projects that were community-initiated, community-chosen, and driven by equity. Revenue from the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funded the program. In the 2023-2024 City of Seattle budget process, a decision was made to sunset YVYC in 2023 due to the \$141 million revenue gap.

The **Neighborhood Street Fund (NSF)\*** program enables the community to propose and prioritize transportation projects that are built by SDOT. Any transportation project in the City’s public right-of-way that costs between \$100,000 and \$1 million is eligible for consideration. Past projects have included: new sidewalks, crosswalks, protected bike lanes, bus stop upgrades, intersection safety improvements, stormwater improvements, and public art. The LMS funds NSF and earmarked \$26





**Polling & Focus Groups**

Public polling conducted by EMC Research, a consultant SDOT worked with for this project, provided information used to develop the levy proposal.

**May 2023 Polling**

EMC Research conducted a resident survey in May 2023. The survey was designed to evaluate the opinions of Seattle voters on Seattle transportation topics. A total of 500 interviews were conducted via a hybrid approach, using live telephone interviews on landlines and mobile phones, as well as email/text invitations to an online survey. Results were checked against the universe of registered voters in Seattle, and weighted when necessary; thus the survey results can be projected to registered voters in the City of Seattle.

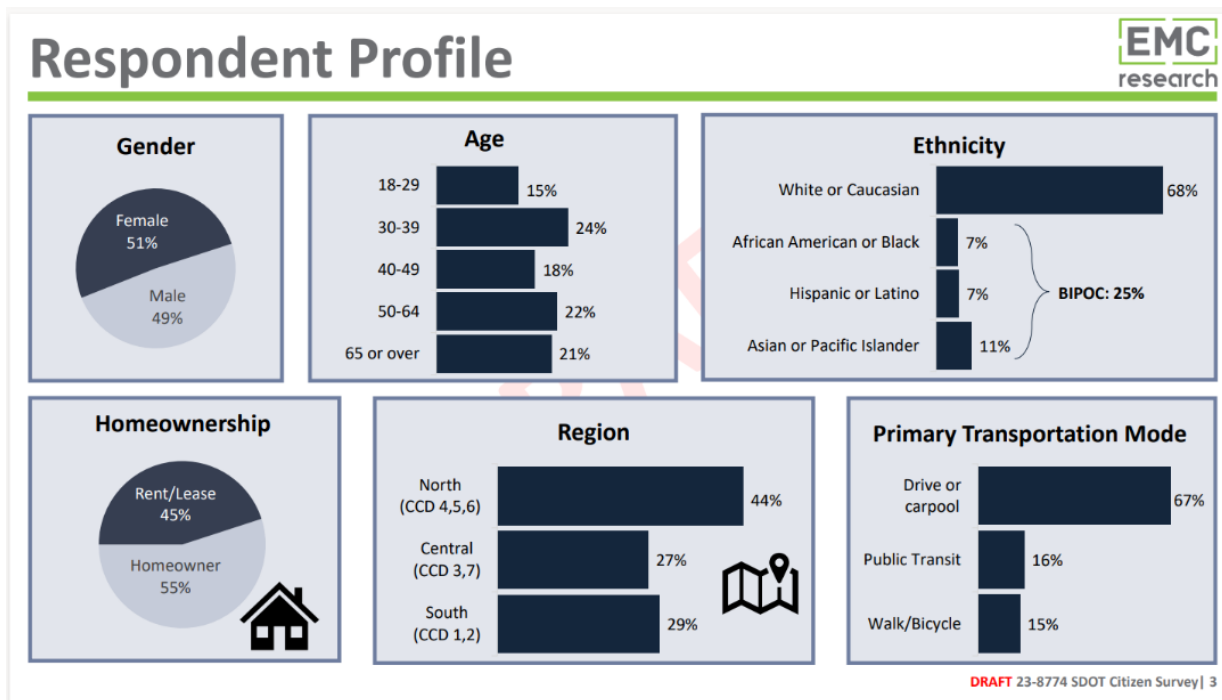


Figure 8: Demographic Profile of Polled Seattle Residents (Source: EMC Research)

**Among the results of the survey:**

*Roads, public transit, and traffic are seen as less pressing issues compared to Homelessness, Crime/drugs/public safety, and Cost of living/affordable housing.*

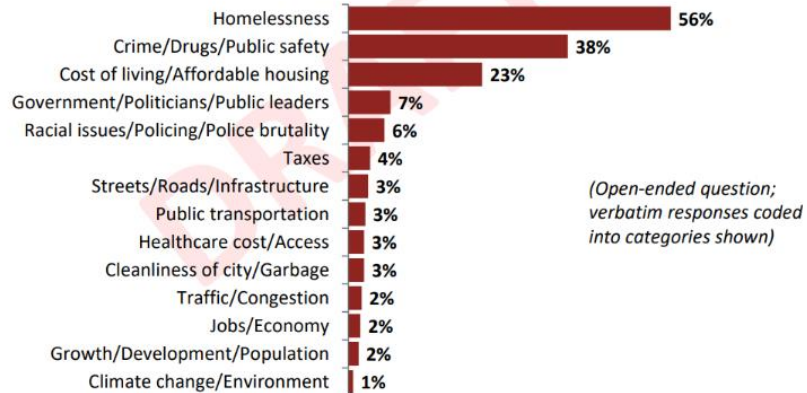


# Top Issues of Concern in Seattle (Mar '23)



Homelessness and public safety are by far the biggest concerns in Seattle.  
Roads, public transit, and traffic are much less pressing issues (8% in 2023 vs 38% in 2018)

What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?  
(Multiple Responses Accepted)



Source: The Index, Seattle Metro Chamber (March 2023)

DRAFT 23-8774 SDOT Citizen Survey | 6

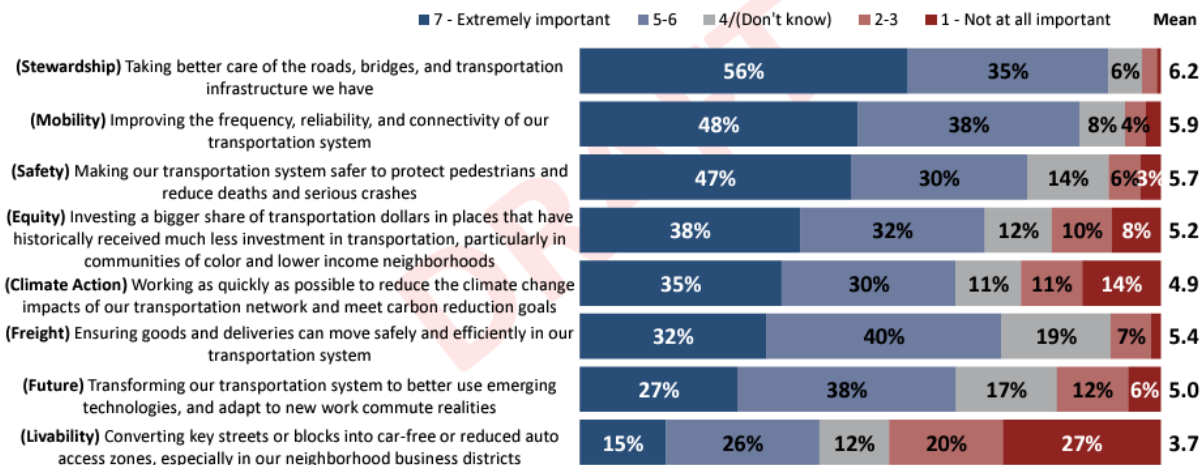
Figure 9: Top Issues of Concern in Seattle (Source: EMC Research)

Almost all SDOT’s “Key Moves” are seen as important; *maintenance, improved frequency/reliability/connectivity, and safety* in the transportation system are seen as the most important.

# Importance of SDOT’s “Key Moves” (Plus)



Many of the goals for Seattle’s transportation future are important to voters. All but one have a majority giving that item a rating over 4; the Livability item is not a high priority but is supported in a later question.



Q3-10. I'm going to read you a list of potential goals for Seattle's transportation future. After each, please rate how important that should be for Seattle, using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all important, and 7 means extremely important.

DRAFT 23-8774 SDOT Citizen Survey | 9

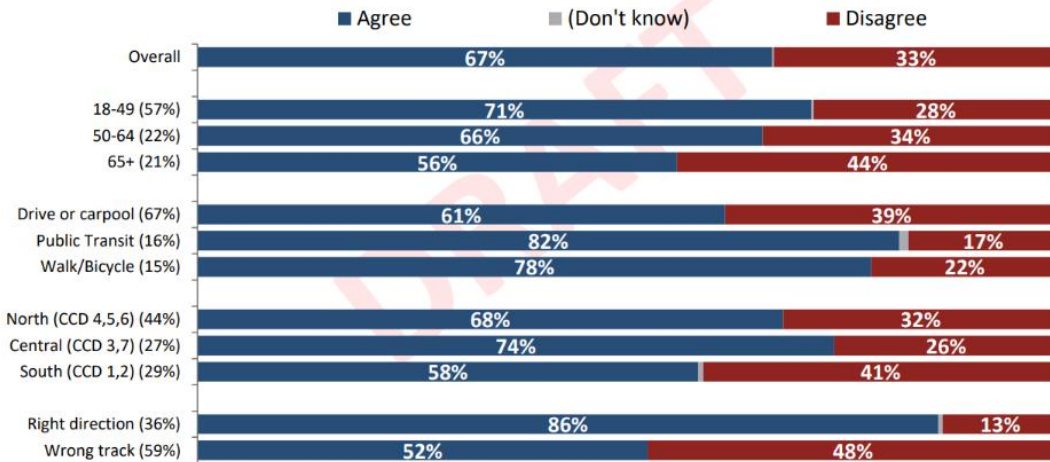
Figure 10: Importance of SDOT’s “Key Moves” (Plus) (Source: EMC Research)

There is majority support (67%) for *raising taxes to improve the transportation system*, but this is a generic question not attached to an amount or a specific plan.

## Tax Attitudes by Subgroups



**Improving the overall transportation system in Seattle should be a top priority, even if it means raising taxes.**



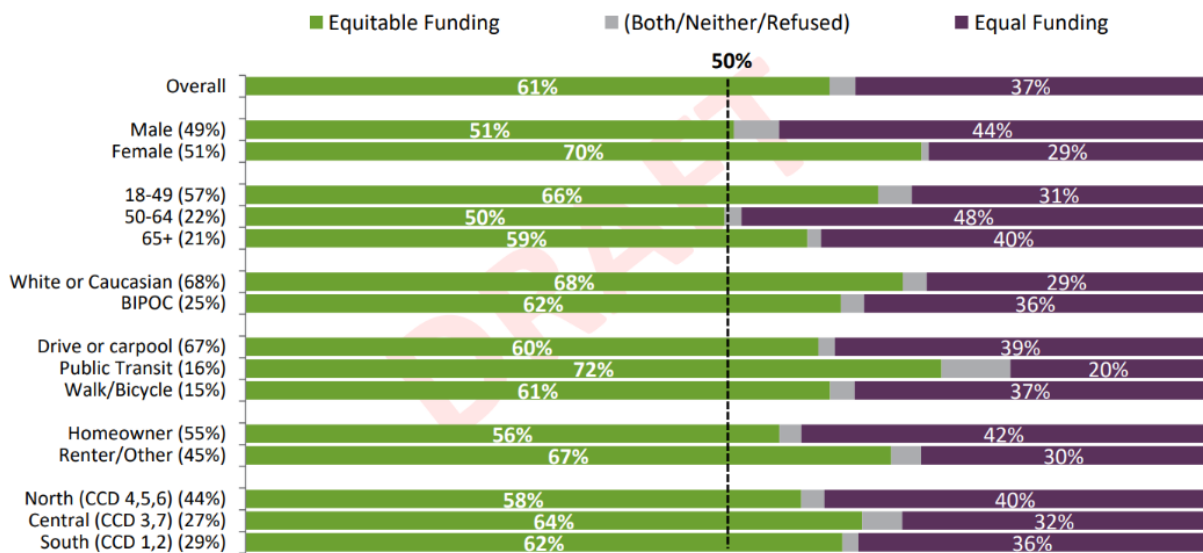
Q18. I'm going to read you some statements about the transportation system in Seattle. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each.

DRAFT 23-8774 SDOT Citizen Survey | 11

Figure 11: Top Issues of Concern in Seattle (Source: EMC Research)

There was support for *investing more transportation dollars in neighborhoods and communities that have been historically deprived of investment or negatively impacted*.

## Forced Choice – Funding Allocation by Subgroups



Q34. Thinking about how the City should prioritize transportation investments, which of the following is closer to your opinion

DRAFT 23-8774 SDOT Citizen Survey | 15

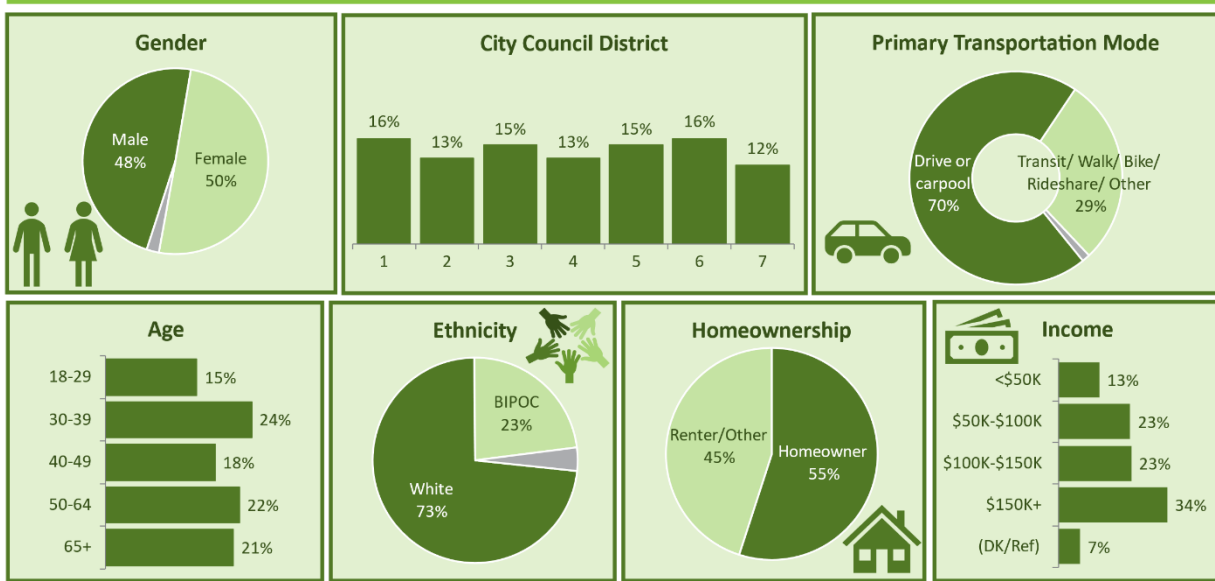
Figure 12: Forced Choice – Funding Allocation by Subgroups (Source: EMC Research)

In summary, the results suggested a viable package that includes some investment in nearly all the transportation priorities tested.

**Fall 2023 Polling**

In fall 2023, EMC Research again polled Seattle residents to gather information on residents’ top transportation priorities and appetite in approving a transportation levy. EMC Research used mixed-mode telephone and email/text-to-web methodology; phone interviews via landlines and mobile phones were conducted by trained, professional interviewers and email and text invitations were sent with a link to an online survey. EMC Research conducted 1,000 interviews and a split sample methodology was used to test two different potential levy amounts.

## Respondents’ Demographic Profile



23-9032 SDOT Transportation Levy Survey | 24

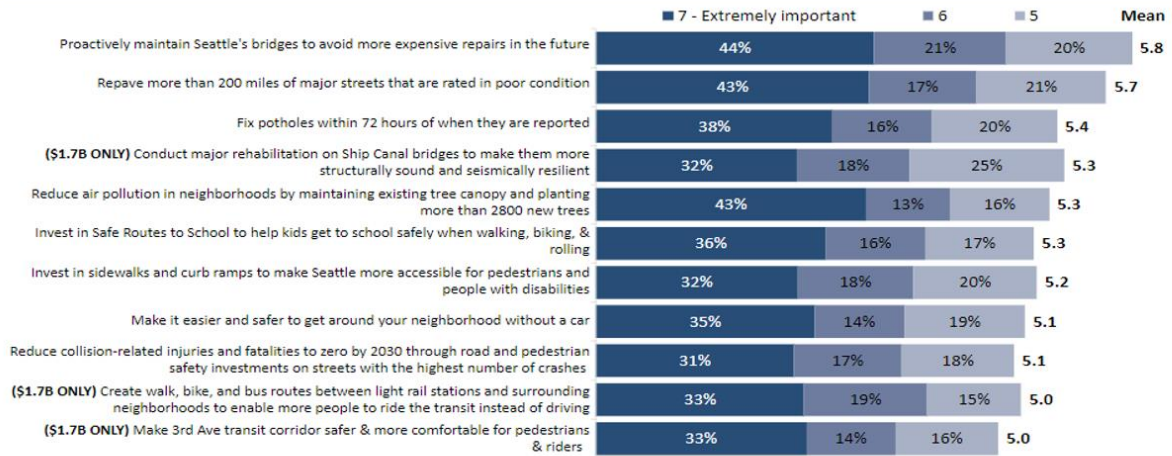
Figure 13: Demographic Profile of Polled Seattle Residents (Source: EMC Research)

Respondents indicated many *maintenance* transportation items as important, followed by *climate*, *safety*, and *car-free travel*.

# Transportation Priorities – Top Tier



These items are all seen as important, many maintenance items are at the top, followed by climate, safety, and car-free travel



Q24-46. Next I'm going to read you a list of items that may be funded by the potential levy measure. After each one, please rate how important that item is to be included in the levy, using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all important, and 7 means extremely important. 23-9032 SDOT Transportation Levy Survey DRAFT | 9

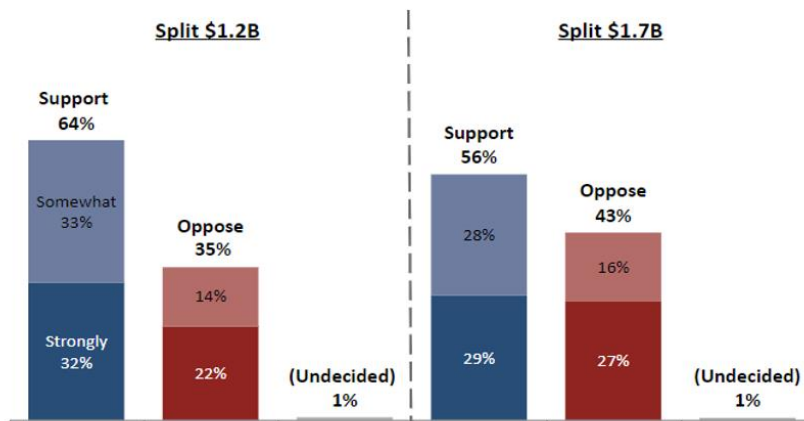
Figure 14: Responses on Transportation Priorities from Polled Seattle Residents (Source: EMC Research)

Respondents were also asked about supporting a potential levy amount at \$1.2 billion (500 people) or \$1.7 billion (500 people). Most polled indicated they would support a measure renewing and expanding Seattle transportation levy at both amounts, with a stronger support from those asked about the \$1.2 billion amount (Figure 15). However, BIPOC polled residents were less supportive of either the \$1.2 billion or \$1.7 billion levy amount compared to white polled residents (Figure 16 & 17).

# Initial Support



A majority say they would support a measure renewing and expanding Seattle's transportation levy at both amounts tested, although around half of the support is in the softer "somewhat" category. Support for \$1.2B is close to two-thirds.



Q7. Next November there may be a measure on the ballot in Seattle that reads as follows... Would you support or oppose this measure?

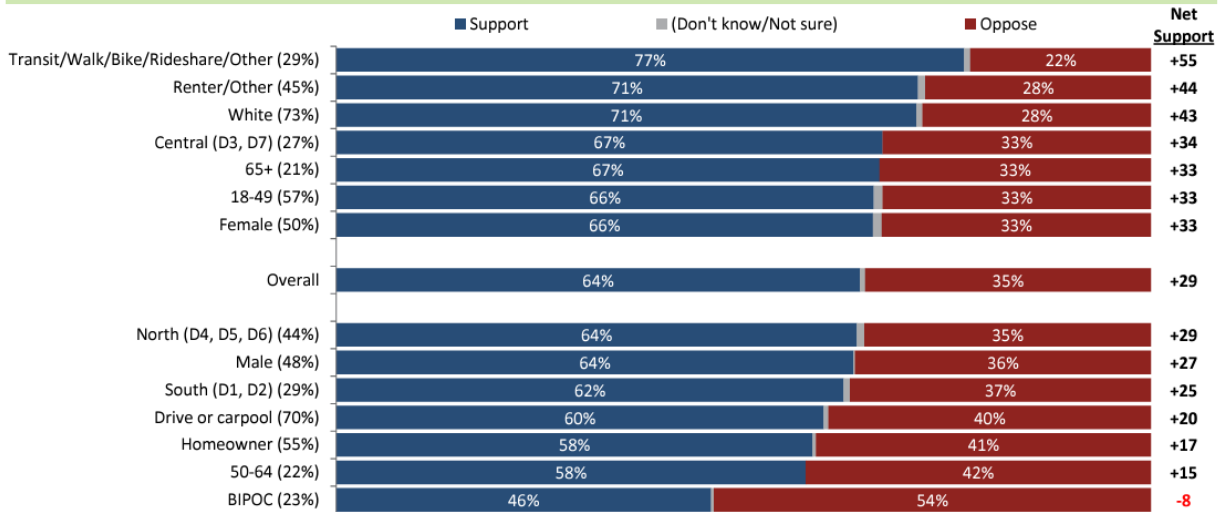
23-9032 SDOT Transportation Levy Survey DRAFT | 11

Figure 15: Responses for Initial Support (Source: EMC Research)

# Initial Support by Subgroup - \$1.2B



Support for the smaller levy amount is above 50% across most demographics.



Q7. Next November there may be a measure on the ballot in Seattle that reads as follows...  
Would you support or oppose this measure?

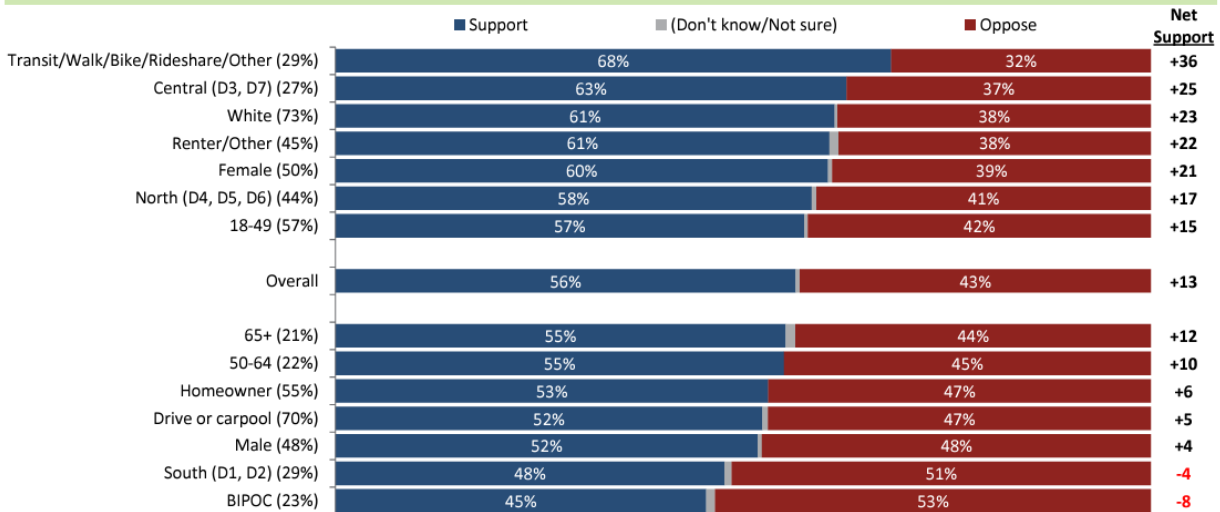
23-9032 SDOT Transportation Levy DRAFT | 10

Figure 16: Initial Support by Subgroup - \$1.2B (Source: EMC Research)

# Initial Support by Subgroup - \$1.7B



While support is generally lower for the larger levy amount, relative support across demographics is similar to the \$1.2B levy.



Q7. Next November there may be a measure on the ballot in Seattle that reads as follows...  
Would you support or oppose this measure?

23-9032 SDOT Transportation Levy DRAFT | 11

Figure 17: Initial Support by Subgroup - \$1.7B (Source: EMC Research)

## DON Community Liaison (CL) Focus Groups

The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Community Liaison (CL) program began in 2009 to help the city when engaging and serving historically underrepresented communities, such as refugee



communities, seniors, youth, and people with disabilities. CLs are independent contractors who engage with their communities and give the city advice based on what they hear. They are trusted advisors, and SDOT relies in part on them to help guide engagement.

Liaisons represent many communities, including Vietnamese, Spanish, Amharic/Oromo, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, seniors, the unhoused, and people with disabilities.

On February 6, 2024, external consultant BDS Planning and Urban Design (now Uncommon Bridges) facilitated a conversation with the DON CLs representing underrepresented communities in Seattle regarding SDOT's transportation levy proposal. They led a discussion around safety, personal transportation, neighborhood connections, and equitable investments.

The correlation between transportation safety and personal safety was a consistent topic of discussion.

Key themes of conversations and insights are:

- Improvement of current infrastructure, specifically improving sidewalks and crosswalks to increase pedestrian safety.
- Elimination of physical, economic, geographic, language, and technological barriers to transportation.
- Establishment of more direct public transportation routes, specifically east to west.
- Advancement of workforce development opportunities and City apprenticeships.

SDOT partnered with the DON Community Liaison's (CLs) to identify and staff community tabling events across Seattle. CLs were able to have in-language conversations and collect feedback in multiple languages including Vietnamese and Somali.

### External Stakeholder Engagement

#### **Materials**

The team prepared a wide range of public-facing materials to inform people about the transportation proposal. Core materials included a [30+ page transportation proposal](#), [executive summary](#), frequently asked questions and a [community priority questionnaire](#).

#### **In-Person Engagement**

SDOT conducted a city-wide stakeholder engagement process to inform, receive feedback and listen to people who live, work, and play in Seattle. Engagement took place through a series of group meetings, one-on-ones, roadshow presentations, and tabling at community events. The Mayor's Office and SDOT also held a media event on April 4, 2024 to announce the draft proposal, and raise awareness of the ways the public can provide feedback.

#### **One-on-Ones and Roadshow Presentations**

Stakeholders include councilmembers, transportation advocates, and organizations with deep institutional knowledge and/or a history of helping the City of Seattle in passing previous transportation levies. Specific organizations we engaged with included:

- Downtown Seattle Association (DSA)

- Cascade Bicycle Club
- Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
- Transportation Choices Coalition
- Commute Seattle
- Chamber of Commerce
- Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority (SCIDpda)
- Friends of Little Saigon
- Labor Advocates
- Disability Rights Washington
- Pioneer Square Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- SODO Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- Ballard Alliance
- El Centro de la Raza
- Central Area Collaborative
- Duwamish River Community Coalition

### **Community Tabling Events**

The team participated in community events across the city to engage with and hear directly from Seattle residents. At these events, team members spoke 1:1 with people about the proposal and received feedback on how the final proposal could best support them. SDOT staff, consultant communications team and DON CLs staffed these events. Specific tabling events included:

- SODO BIA Open House
- Columbia City Farmer's Market
- Capitol Hill Farmer's Market
- Northgate Transit Center
- Westlake Plaza
- Ballard Farmer's Market
- University Farmer's Market
- West Seattle Farmer's Market
- Lynnwood Senior Center and Foodbank
- Cedar Park Senior Housing in Lake City

### ***Digital Engagement***

The team used several communication channels to raise awareness and inform people of the proposal. Communications methods included City of Seattle email listserv, blog, social media, earned media, and a paid multicultural ad campaign.

The team created a webpage on seattle.gov and developed an online community engagement portal that incorporated the community questionnaire. People were informed of the proposal and encouraged to learn more and provide feedback via the website and hub through various means including promotional posters posted at community centers and libraries, media (paid and earned), email notices, and a QR code posted on all core materials.

### ***Multicultural media***

In addition to conducting a comprehensive media outreach effort to traditional print, radio and tv outlets the team developed and implemented a multicultural media plan to raise up BIPOC communities. The multicultural media effort included turnout to project hosted media events, 1:1 interviews and placement of in-language online, print and radio paid ads.

Multicultural media outlets the team conducted outreach to included: Converge Media, Seattle Medium, Runta News, Rainier Ave Radio, NW Asian Weekly and Se Habla Media.

### ***Accessibility***

All core materials, the online hub, questionnaire, and SDOT project web page were transcreated into the City's Tier 1 languages: Traditional Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Korean, and Tagalog, with additional languages as needed and upon request. Materials posted online like the full proposal and summary were formatted to align with City of Seattle accessibility guidelines for people with a diverse range of hearing, movement, sight, and cognitive ability.

2d. What does data and your conversations with stakeholders tell you about existing racial inequities that influence people's lives and should be taken into consideration?

### **STP Engagement**

Here are some key themes we heard in the last phase of public engagement on the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP), which informed the final plan:

- The STP is heading in the right direction, but it needs to be bolder and more actionable.
- The STP should be specific about what will get implemented and where, and it should directly address tradeoffs with how we use our streets.
- We need to set specific measures of progress toward the STP vision and goals, defining where we're at and what success looks like.
- People want additional opportunities to engage with the STP process and provide more feedback.
- Many people in our historically underrepresented communities want safety, equity, and mobility to guide prioritization of what we do first.

### **Analyzing the Impact of Taxes on Low-Income & BIPOC Communities in Seattle**

In partnership with the UW's Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, we conducted an initial study on the equity impacts of property taxes and implemented **TEF Value: Transit Access, Tactic 49.2: Evaluate impact of new taxes on low income and other income groups for long term funding proposals.**



We acknowledge that our regressive tax system in Washington may disproportionately impact specific racial populations and the burdens property tax can carry for homeowners and renters. We considered the key findings from this study as we developed increased levy scenarios, centered affordability and the impact of an increased property tax for communities of color, aging adults, and low-income communities. Analysis from this study supported us in developing levy deliverables to meet the needs of those most disproportionately impacted by affordability, and areas that historically have not seen the benefits of these property tax to transportation investments.

**Key Findings**

- Existing literature on the amount of property taxes passed down from landlords to renters ranges from 0% to 115%.
- Homeowners with mortgages paid a lower percentage of their household income towards property taxes than did homeowners without mortgages and renters (assuming a 100% pass down) across all 12 sampled tracts.
- Property taxes may have a bigger effect on low-income renters and homeowners without mortgages than homeowners with mortgages.
- Over 51% of homeowners without mortgages in our sampled tracts are aged 65+. This suggests that seniors may be more impacted by property taxes.
- All five of the lowest effective tax rates were associated with homeowners with mortgages, a group that had above-city average median household income across all 12 sampled tracts (Figure 18). This suggests that the regressivity of property taxes may not necessarily only be associated with geographic location, but also homeownership/renter status, mortgage status, age, and/or income.
- The effect of property taxes on BIPOC communities was less clear, particularly for homeowners with and without mortgages.
- Property taxes may have more of a negative impact on BIPOC renters, assuming there is a 100% pass down of property taxes from landlords to tenants.

Tracts with the <u>Lowest</u> Effective Property Tax Rates			
Tract	Effective Tax Rate	Homeownership Status	Median HH Income
South Park	2.98%	H/O with Mortg	\$126,781.00
Lake City	3.09%	H/O with Mortg	\$159,513.00
Wedgwood	3.11%	H/O with Mortg	\$201,443.00
Ballard	3.26%	H/O with Mortg	\$194,600.00
Fauntleroy	3.31%	H/O with Mortg	\$137,969.00

Figure 18: Census tracts with the five lowest effective property tax rates and their corresponding homeownership status and median household income. Data Source: ACS 5-year Survey (2017-2021)

In Seattle, over half of white households (51%) are homeowners compared to less than a 30% homeownership rate for Black, Hispanic or Latino, or Native American households (“Equitable Development Community Indicators Report,” 2020). The study focused on seeing if there were similar trends in homeownership rates by race and ethnicity in 12 sampled tracts.

Figure 19 shows a breakdown of homeownership rates for each sampled census tract. Only Rainier Valley and Rainier Beach had homeownership rates for BIPOC households that were at or above the city average. Meanwhile, Fauntleroy, Madison Park, Ballard, and Wedgwood had above-city average homeownership rates for white households.

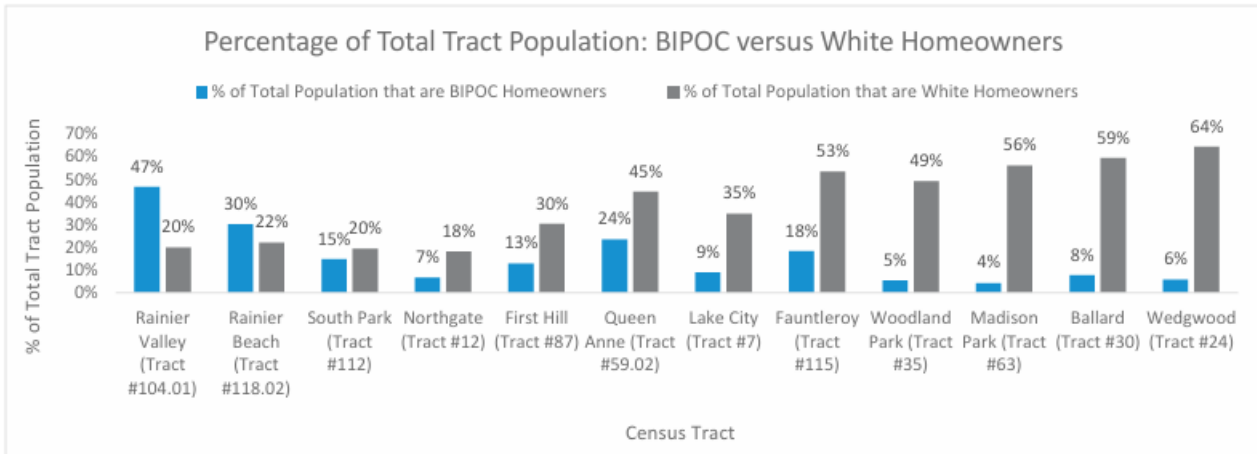


Figure 19: Comparison of BIPOC versus white homeownership rates as a percentage of the tract’s total population (homeowners and renters combined). Data Source: ACS 5-year Survey (2017-2021)

The study also examined the percentage of homeowners versus renters for each tract (Figure 20). Fauntleroy, Wedgwood, Queen Anne, Ballard, and Rainier Valley had the highest percentage of homeowners (above 65% in each tract). Lake City, First Hill, South Park, and Northgate had the highest percentage of renters (above 50% in each tract).

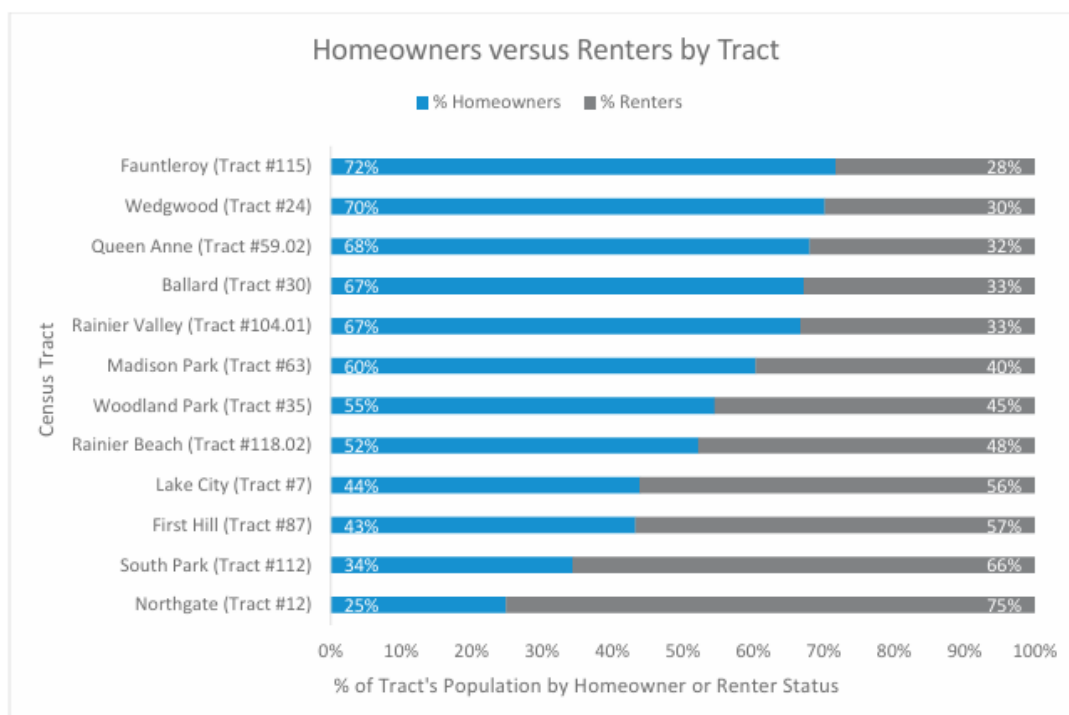


Figure 20: Breakdown of each tract's population by homeowner or renter status. Data Source: ACS 5-year Survey (2017-2021)

### Qualitative Analysis

Participants of the qualitative analysis included BIPOC homeowners, renters, and unhoused community members in Seattle and were prioritized for inclusion to reflect the target population of communities of color, aging adults and low-income populations the study sought to understand. The eight interview participants were aware how taxes financially impacted them and reported:

- **Housing is expensive and unaffordable.** For most renters, paying rent represented the greatest financial challenge. Homeowners, with and without mortgages, described paying property taxes and keeping their homes as a financial struggle.
- **Residents confront tradeoffs when obtaining essential goods.** The financial impact of taxes has a cumulative effect that contributes to Seattle feeling expensive and unaffordable. The impact of Seattle-specific taxes was generally indistinguishable from other local, state, and federal taxes and all contributed to the cost of living feeling high.
- **It is difficult to know how taxes are used and to see direct benefits.** Participants understood that property and sales taxes are very high in Seattle, and generally associated taxes with a reduction to their income. They did not indicate that the benefits they received were proportional to the high taxes they paid.
- **Feeling little or no voice in influencing the Seattle tax system.** Most participants did not know where to go to find more information about taxes including what amount they pay, which items are exempt, which programs they may qualify for, and how their tax dollars are used.

We recognize this study is our department's initial step in exploring this topic and the limitations of the data set that the students worked with, including a limited sample of qualitative data, and the findings

will continue to develop over time. As a city, we commit to continue to look at these impacts and take them into consideration when considering taxes as a source of revenue for our department.

***Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW) & SDOT Staff Collaboration (TEF Tactic 18.3 & 25.6)***

Conversations in our subcommittee with TEW and SDOT SMEs for TEF Tactic 18.3 shed light on racial inequities that exist in the way SDOT has been able to deliver our two Participatory Budgeting (PB)-like programs YVYC and NSF.

Key topics we heard include:

- Not having enough SDOT staffing or resources to adequately provide intentional outreach and engagement to communities of color.
- Lack of knowledge in community on government processes, policies and how to navigate the City system to access funding.
- Design, funding and other restrictions that can impact the type of community projects allowed.

These topics were taken into consideration as SDOT SMEs and TEW developed recommendations from this collaboration. They strongly supported SDOT to continue funding programs in the levy proposal that centers on co-creating and delivering community-initiated projects with an increased budget to resource outreach and engagement efforts.

In Q1 2024, staff began engaging the TEW in implementing **TEF Value: Decision-Making, Transparency & Accountability, Tactic 25.6: *Engage the Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW) in the development of the next transportation funding package, particularly in crafting language related to composition and make-up of the next oversight committee.***

In our initial conversations, the TEW uplifted existing inequities that can impact the diverse participation and equity responsibilities in the oversight committee. Some of the key topics include:

- Lack of compensation available to incentivize community members' participation.
- Ensuring SDOT has enough resources to conduct outreach during recruitment and support for committee members successful participation.
- Professional development opportunities to build committee members' skills throughout their time as an oversight committee member.
- Representation within the oversight committee that includes lived experiences from the high and second highest equity priority areas.

This information is key for us to consider as we work to ensure racial diversity and equity is reflected in the make-up, process, and structure of the future oversight committee.

**Levy Proposal Feedback**

**2e. What are the root causes or factors creating these racial inequities?**

*RET Tip: Consider examples like lack of affordability, lack of accessibility, lack of safety, lack of racially inclusive engagement, bias in process, barriers, etc.*

Seattle's long history of red-lining and other forms of housing discrimination are certainly a root cause of past underinvestment. Local Improvement Districts were sometimes used by wealthier neighborhoods to fund local investments (e.g., streetlights, sidewalks).

Lack of use of data and quantitative criteria for prioritizing projects has also led to the best organized and most well-connected communities garnering a disproportionate share of investment. These patterns only started to change as the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) was first adopted in 2004, shortly before the Bridging the Gap levy was approved by voters in November 2006. In response to RSJI, SDOT adopted more refined project prioritization scoring systems that were data-driven and emphasized racial equity.

Many City boards and commission members are volunteers, and the LMS ordinance dictates this for the LOC as well. Not compensating community members contributes to the lack of diversity and representation we often see in the make-up of our city boards.

Regressivity at the local tax system level is another factor. Studies have found that Seattle has the most regressive tax system and highest income inequality in Washington State (Caruchet, 2018). The average household making \$25,000 in Seattle pays 17% (the effective tax rate) of their income in state and local taxes compared to 4.4% for a household in Seattle making \$250,000. For the household making \$25,000 in Seattle, 10% of their income went to property taxes versus 2.5% of income for the household making \$250,000.

Examining tax equity in the context of race and ethnicity can be particularly challenging because tax data is not disaggregated by race/ethnicity at state, local, or federal levels (Boddupalli, Gordon, and German 2021). However, it is possible to extrapolate based on known and existing statistics. For example, because households of color are also disproportionately low-income households, regressive types of taxation perpetuate and exacerbate systemic racial inequalities. Because of the racial wealth gap, the most regressive taxes, like sales and consumption taxes, are likely to tax a much higher proportion of a household of color’s income than a white household’s income (Hill, Davis, and Wiehe 2021).

Most of SDOT’s funding sources are strict or moderately strict, meaning that as a department we have underlying laws that restrict how money can be used and/or reallocation is restricted. Our complex funding source system occasionally restricts SDOT from being able to address the transportation inequities communities of color experience.

Funding Source	How Restricted?	How Stable?
Levy to Move Seattle*	Strict	Stable
Grants, Loans, Partnership Funds	Strict	Variable
Seattle Transit Measure 0.15% Sales Tax*	Strict	Variable
Street Vacation	Strict	Variable
Reimbursable	Strict	Stable
Property Proceeds	Strict	Variable
Street Use & Occupation Fees	Moderate	Variable
Gas Tax	Moderate	Variable
Vehicle License Fees*	Moderate	Stable
Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)	Moderate	Variable
School Safety Traffic & Ped Improvement	Moderate	Variable
Commercial Parking Tax	Flexible	Variable

General Fund	Flexible	Variable
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*\*Must be voter-approved in part or in full*

### Step 3. Determine Benefit and/or Burden

#### 3a. How will the policy, initiative, program, or budget issue increase or decrease racial equity?

The proposed property tax levy will support increasing racial equity in a few different ways:

- The levy proposal proposed investment in currently and historically underinvested neighborhoods.
- For ongoing programs, equity would be a critical component of our implementation plans. The Levy Equity Map and Impact Analysis Tool will allow SDOT to show the distribution of investments.
- The Equitable Tree Canopy program would be focused on increasing tree canopy and tree species diversity in neighborhoods that historically have had less investment in tree planting and care.
- Expansion and proposed reorganization of the Neighborhood Street Fund, now called Neighborhood Initiated Safety Partnership projects, would develop community-requested projects directly with neighborhoods, prioritizing areas of historic under investment.
- For Major Street Maintenance & Modernization projects, several candidate projects would directly invest in historically underinvested and disadvantaged communities, as identified in the two highest priority quintiles of the OPCD Race and Social Equity Index (bolded projects intersect the highest equity priority areas). Some of these are below:
  - **S Henderson St** (implementing ideas from Rainier Beach Action Coalition).
  - **Beacon Ave S** investments in paving, transit improvements and a bicycling corridor.
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Ave S/SW Olson Pl** making a key connection between communities.
  - **Rainier Ave S**: both Rapid Ride R and repaving work.
  - **15th Ave NE, Pinehurst Way NE, Roosevelt Way NE**
  - **35th Ave SW**
  - East Marginal Way S
  - Elliott Ave, Western Ave
  - **James St**
  - **N 130th St**
  - **S Albro Pl, Ellis Ave S, Corson Ave S, 16th Ave S**
  - **Aurora Ave N multimodal improvements**
  - South Lake Union, East/West, transit connections
  - 14th Ave S, 12th Ave S, Golf Dr S \*

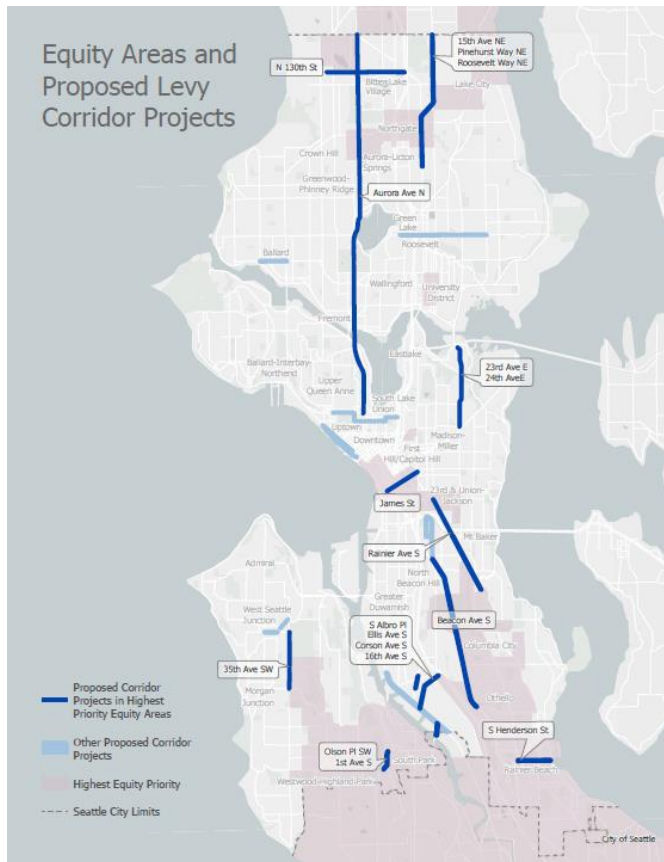


Figure 21: Equity Areas and Proposed Levy Corridor Projects (Source: Draft Transportation Levy Proposal)

- Among more, the Vision Zero, School & Neighborhood Safety program would implement safety projects on 12 priority corridors on the City’s high injury network with an emphasis on equity-priority communities.
- The RSE map has been a foundational piece of work that we used to determine where to invest in large corridor projects. Programs will continue to use the RSE map when developing work plans and where to focus their investments. Prioritization framework for programs includes equity criterion that uses the RSE index to inform work plans and deliverables.
- The property tax levy would move to an eight-year cycle to align with presidential votes. These elections have higher turnout than odd-year elections, and participation in voting is typically more inclusive of actual citizen demographics along lines of race, age, education, and housing status. Alignment with even-year elections will lead to more democratic participation in the levy votes this year and give the same opportunity going forward if there is passage and renewal.
- TEF tactics advanced by the levy address some of the structural challenges faced by SDOT.
- Practice improvements that increase racial equity include:
  - Transparency and accountability: Report on distribution of SDOT investments – Percentage of projects and spending across different geographies of interest (e.g., in each quintile of the RSE Index, in each neighborhood, in each council district, etc.) and the impact of this specific investment to this population



- Conducting Racial equity analysis: Implement policy/process outcomes identified in the Levy Proposal Racial Equity Analysis. Conduct or update racial equity analyses for levy-funded projects and programs as they are implemented.
- Advance the Transportation Equity Framework: Define which TEF tactics the levy should advance/implement. In each annual delivery plan, indicate which TEF tactics will be implemented/advanced that year.
- Comply with Title VI: implementation and reporting requirements, education and training, data collection at project and program level, public engagement, project location and design, environmental justice principles, provide meaningful access to programs and activities to Limited English Proficient populations, implementation of Departmental Language Access Plan (including prioritization of funds).
- Displacement mitigation: Integrate displacement mitigation strategies (SDOT could lead or support) to accompany investments made in communities experiencing significant displacement pressure/risk.
- There would likely be impacts to racial equity if the levy proposal is not successful, as it is roughly 20-30% of our budget.

The proposed property tax levy will decrease racial equity in a few different ways:

- Increased property tax may disproportionately impact BIPOC homeowners or renters and neighborhoods with high percentage of BIPOC homeowners such as in Rainier Valley and Rainier Beach.
- If the levy renewal is not successful, there would be significant impacts to racial equity as it is roughly 30% of SDOT's budget. This would reduce the number of projects and programs our department would be able to deliver in equity priority areas and impact our workforce.

### 3b. What benefits to the impacted community/demographic may result?

The benefits of the levy proposal for high equity priority areas and communities we have historically underinvested could include the below:

- Reduced traffic collisions, severe injuries and fatalities through targeted improvements to streets, sidewalks, intersections, paths and crossings.
- Repaved and improved streets and make it safer to walk, roll, bike and ride transit.
- People connected safely to transit, including Link light rail stations; improve bus stops; and reduce delays on bus routes.
- New and repaired sidewalks, crossings and curb ramps so people walking and rolling can safely get to where they need to go.
- New, maintained, and upgraded traffic signals, and improved pedestrian and bike accessibility.
- Public spaces made more inviting, and improved lighting, so people can enjoy unique and vibrant neighborhoods and business districts.
- Reduction of air pollution and sustainable transportation options made more available.

#### **Benefits of Community-Driven Projects and Programs (TEF Tactic 18.3)**

Over the course of the TEW and SDOT SMEs subcommittees' work on TEF Tactic 18.3, key priorities for a new PB process were identified to support the inclusion of co-creating community projects and



programs in the levy proposal. These priorities not only guided the development of the options but could then be refined and turned into criteria against which the options would be measured. In summary the subcommittees identified that an improved PB process would result in community co-created opportunities and benefit communities in the following ways:

- Improve equitable engagement and outreach for historically underserved communities.
- Enable meaningful outcomes for community.
- Increase transparency with community about process and project changes.
- Increase capacity to deliver projects on time.
- Reduce barriers to submitting project ideas.
- Reduce competitive the nature of program.
- Plan for unselected projects.
- Be responsive to learnings from this subcommittee process.
- Allow for more projects to be completed.
- Empower residents by reducing control that city government has on the program.
- Provide enough project funding to generate excitement among community members.
- Provide enough funding to hire dedicated staff to implement and successfully engage communities.
- Place fewer restrictions on the types of projects allowed.
- Better set community expectations about the program so it doesn't encourage residents to believe that PB would have a transformative effect and leading to disillusionment when outcomes were more modest.
- Provide meaningful work opportunities for local, small, women and minority owned businesses.
- Increase job opportunities and provide family wage jobs for the local workforce.

### 3c. What are potential unintended consequences (both negative and positive potential impact)?

#### **Negative Consequences**

We could fail to meaningfully focus investments in high equity priority areas and the outcomes listed above could be felt inequitably across the city.

Neighborhood improvements, especially in areas of the city that have historically experienced disinvestment (and/or still experience underinvestment today), can have the unintended consequence of attracting new residents and new private development, which can exacerbate or contribute to existing displacement pressures due to rising inequality and unaffordability across Seattle.

We could fail to share decision-making power with community successfully if we do not create the structures and provide adequate resources, including staffing, to support community members who have not traditionally engaged in government with the tools to engage in relationship with SDOT.

There are already longstanding disparities in homeownership rates by race and ethnicity due to redlining and other racial discrimination policies and practices. Since the Levy Proposal includes an increase in property taxes, an unintended consequence is an affordability issue for BIPOC homeowners.

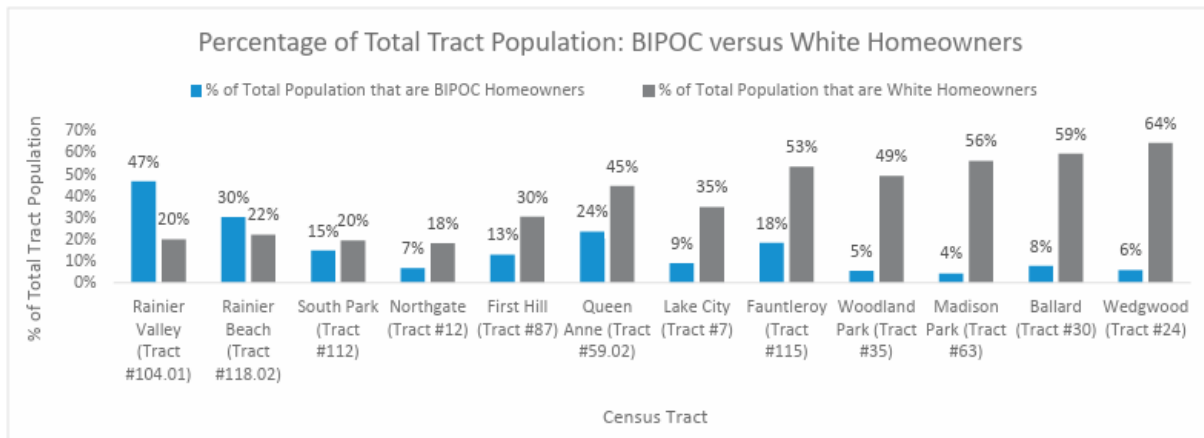


Figure 22: Comparison of BIPOC versus white homeownership rates as a percentage of the tract’s total population (Source: *Paving the Way: Analyzing the Impact of Taxes on Low-Income & BIPOC Communities in Seattle, June 2023*)

### Positive Consequences

SDOT used many inputs to develop the draft proposal, including polling data from EMC research, to inform the final dollar amount of the ballot proposal. We may find that the voters overwhelmingly support the proposed levy and would have been willing to pay more to see progress made towards meeting our safety and maintenance needs across the city more quickly.

Neighborhood co-creation, through Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Projects, is being proposed in this levy to create long term partnerships with communities. We don’t know how successful this idea will be, but it could prove to be a tool that community would like to see more of, and we may need to find alternative funding sources to grow the program at the pace of community.

The opportunities available to WMBE could be very beneficial for those businesses should the measure be approved.

### 3d. Are the impacts aligned with your department’s community outcomes that were defined in Step 1?

Impacts of the levy proposal aligns with the community outcomes that we defined in Step 1. The ways in which the proposed tax levy will support increasing racial equity in Step 3a aligns with the following community outcomes we have defined under the bucket of **Process/Decision-Making**:

- Racial equity analysis
- Center equity in all project/program phases
- Advance the Transportation Equity Framework (TEF)
- Comply with Title VI

The internal impact of practice improvements that increase racial equity aligns with the following community outcomes we have defined under the bucket of **Evaluation/Report**:

- Transparency and Accountability
- Impact Analysis Framework

## Racial Equity Toolkit: Draft Transportation Levy Proposal

- TEF advanced/implemented and WMBE utilization

## Step 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm

*RET Tip: You've identified racial equity issues/impacts resulting from your plans. Now think of HOW you will adjust your plans to AVOID the negative impacts or MITIGATE (minimize) the negative impacts you've identified. Address each change you've made in response to identifying a negative/positive racial equity impact. If you have no choice at all, and must ACCEPT a negative impact, identify WHY you had to accept that impact and WHAT you would have needed to AVOID or MITIGATE the negative impact.*

### 4. How will you address the impacts (including unintended consequences) on racial equity?

- *What strategies address immediate impacts?*
- *What strategies address root causes of inequity listed in 2e?*
- *How will you partner with stakeholders for long-term positive change?*
- *If impacts are not aligned with desired community outcomes, how will you re-align your work?*

This section includes policy, program and partnerships strategies, and also highlights process and practice improvements to address impacts on racial equity. Members of SDOT's Racial and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) Change Team and Funding Plan Team, the RSJI Advisor, and the Levy Equity Coordinator collaborated to offer the following equity processes to support our improvements to our department practice to mitigate impacts to racial equity in meeting the levy proposal's racially equitable community outcomes listed in Step 1:

1. Racial equity analysis: Conduct or update racial equity analyses for levy-funded projects and programs as they are implemented.
2. Center equity in all project and program phases: Ensure project prioritization frameworks incorporate equity considerations in meaningful and consistent ways.
  - a. Ensure all program prioritization frameworks include an equity component or input to help program owners prioritize investments in high equity priority areas. This component can be weighted higher or lower depending on the key priorities of the program, but it should be present.
  - b. The levy portfolio and individual programs should use the City's Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index as a standard equity data source and reference. This tool can also be adapted depending on the key priorities of the program (e.g., certain demographic layers can be turned on or off), but a central, standardized reference will improve consistency in decision-making across the portfolio.
  - c. Document SDOT process changes to the public as part of achieving equity outcomes, including cultural changes in the organization.
3. Advance the Transportation Equity Framework (TEF): In each annual delivery plan, indicate which TEF tactics will be implemented/advanced that year.
  - a. For all Levy-funded projects/programs, conduct meaningful engagement and center our commitment to the TEF values of Community Engagement and Decision-Making, Transparency and Accountability.
  - b. Identify adequate resources in program/project cost estimates and line item vs. umbrella communications program budget.
  - c. At the program level, listen to impacted communities and find ways to ensure those populations shape the selection, design, and delivery of projects and programs in their

neighborhoods, as well as important travel-sheds that provide access between minority communities and jobs and educational opportunities.

- d. Program and project delivery
    - i. Incorporate racial equity priority area and displacement mitigation considerations.
  - e. Cultural shifts both internal and external
    - i. Messaging and education - meet people where they are, and work to address the needs of those who have historically been left out of planning processes and decision-making about the city's transportation system.
    - ii. Ensure in-language access to SDOT materials and information.
    - iii. Equity reporting requirements should be included in legislation.
      1. SDOT will work with future community oversight committee in the first year of the levy (OR SDOT will do this prior to the beginning of the levy proposal) to determine a measurement and evaluation structure that provides the appropriate level of detail and information that is responsive and meaningful.
4. Continue SDOT Title VI requirements and improve data collection and Title VI reporting practices: Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- a. implementation and reporting requirements,
  - b. education and training,
  - c. data collection at project and program level,
  - d. public engagement,
  - e. project location and design,
  - f. environmental justice principles,
  - g. provide meaningful access to programs and activities to Limited English Proficient populations,
  - h. implementation of Departmental Language Access Plan (including prioritization of funds)
5. Transparency and accountability: Report on distribution of SDOT investments, including percentage of projects and spending across different geographies of interest (e.g., in each quintile of the Race and Social Equity (RSE) Index, in each neighborhood, in each council district, etc.) and, when available, the impact of specific investments on specific populations.
- a. A new SDOT tool, the Levy Equity Map, allows the department to show the distribution of investments. Another tool currently in development, the Impact Analysis Tool, will allow SDOT to show how equitably Seattle communities experience certain outcomes and impacts from SDOT's work.
  - b. Explore setting a quantitative goal for equitable distribution of investments and spending in the next levy.
    - i. For example: X% of levy investments and spending will be delivered in the highest and second-highest equity priority areas (representing 40% of the city population).

- ii. Work with stakeholders such as the TEW and City Council to set this goal and define key details such as *what percentage* of work should be delivered, in *which geographies* over *what timeframe*.
  - c. Use qualitative data and analysis, such as community input, staff feedback, and storytelling, to evaluate and report the impact of intentional community engagement practices in levy-delivered projects and programs.
  - d. Ensure Levy equity inclusion in public SDOT reports.
- 6. **Impact Analysis Framework:** Measure the geospatial variations of our key outcomes and ensure that impact of investments is felt equitably across the city.
  - a. Include data collection/evaluation as a line item in budgets.
- 7. **WMBE utilization:**
  - a. We intend to meet or exceed SDOT’s goals of 20% for purchasing and 24% for consulting WMBE spend on contracts and purchases to continue setting and achieving similar utilization throughout the life of the levy.

### **Program Strategies**

In order to address root causes of inequity, we are integrating equity and impact analyses into our decision-making. Through ongoing efforts like the Levy Equity Workplan and the Impact Analysis Framework, we are improving our capacity to understand how equitable the distribution of our investments and outcomes are.

As we shift from primarily counting “widgets” and dollars spent to measuring outcomes, a robust geospatial equity analysis will help us invest our resources equitably—where they are most needed—and ensure that everyone benefits from our improvements, with no one being left behind or disproportionately impacted by costs.

The prioritization rubric developed for the STP and Funding Plan is another programmatic tool that can be carried forward and improved upon to create a consistent and equitable prioritization process to help determine where program funds are invested. This rubric can be used to move forward **TEF Tactic 8.2:** *Develop SDOT work plans that equitably allocate resources for capital projects and maintenance efforts in communities hit hardest by COVID.*

### **Policy Strategies**

Embedding equity into our everyday process and practice within our areas of service as SDOT staff is an input and outcome that we have heard communities would like to see. A host of tools and practices were introduced across SDOT that offer employees and the communities we serve a new connection to the way we do our work. These are core tools of the RSJI Change Team and designed to be excellent leadership supports that offer opportunities for all voices to be heard, independent of workplace positionality and hierarchy.

One of the RSJI tools staff utilized in crafting components of the Levy proposal is circle process. The circle process is a tool at SDOT that allows us to transform how we do our work and deepen listening skills as each person in the circle can offer an opportunity, solution, point of view, and opinion on a

situation or scenario. The purpose of the circle process is that the collective offering of the team curbs hasty decision-making, and instead allows for clarity, care, and conscious awareness to rise from the group. It is a key leadership tool that can be implemented in all areas of service at SDOT and has had a positive effect on team building, motivation, productivity, creativity, and innovation.

Another RSJI tool staff incorporated is strategic questioning process, a dynamic and transformative form of inquiry, conceived by Fran Peavey. Strategic questioning is the premise that if we can ask the right questions, we can discover what needs to change inside of us to move a problem forward. Strategic inquiry deepens the capacity to listen because it relies on our full attention and responsiveness. When we approach a problem from a place of inquiry and curiosity versus needing to fix it (without understanding it), transformation happens and can impact choices and decisions that have long-term effects for SDOT and the communities we serve.

### Seattle Transportation Plan

As we move forward beyond adoption of the STP, we will continue the process of co-creation. Community input has been used to shape a potential levy proposal for voters to have their say on the November 2024 ballot. Once our financial picture is clearer, we will develop our first STP Implementation Plan in 2025. Thereafter, we will commit to updating the STP Implementation Plan approximately every 4 years. We pledge to continue with a lens of co-creation and equitable engagement that occurred during the development of the STP.

### Transportation Equity Framework (TEF)

SDOT's TEF is a 6-year roadmap for SDOT decision-makers, employees, stakeholders, partners, and the greater community to collaboratively create an equitable transportation system. Building from the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), the TEF addresses the disparities that exist in our transportation systems due to institutional racism.

The TEF defines 10 values developed by the TEW, as well as strategies that guide the tactics in the implementation plan. In 2022, SDOT publicly released the TEF and its implementation plan with over 200 tactics for SDOT staff to incorporate into workplans.

At the outset of the Funding Plan, the management team identified 15 TEF tactics to implement and integrate into both our development process and the Levy Proposal plan itself ([See Appendix A](#)). The 15 TEF tactics identified in our work correspond to the TEF Values shown on the right.



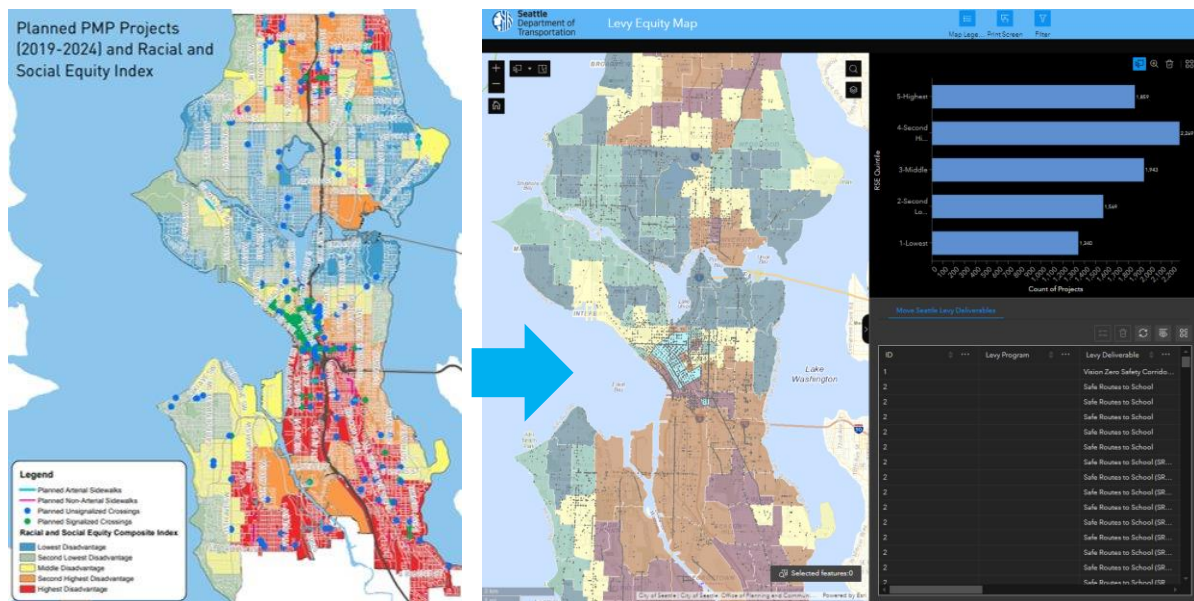
## Levy to Move Seattle – Equity Analysis

In the second half of the delivery of the LMS, SDOT began using the Racial and Social Equity Index (first developed by the Office of Planning and Community Development in 2017) as the standard data reference for equity criteria in project prioritization frameworks.

SDOT also improved its capacity for assessing the geospatial distribution of investments, which allows us to understand what portion of our investments is focused in high equity priority areas. Continuing to improve this capacity, reporting publicly on our findings, and using this data to inform our future investment prioritization decisions can help us achieve our intended outcomes of investing in underinvested communities and increasing transparency and accountability.

### Origins

This standardized use of the Race and Social Equity (RSE) Index and improved capacity for geospatial analysis of investment distribution originated with a [COVID Impact Assessment](#) we conducted in 2020, as well as with individual levy programs that had been assessing the distribution of their investments since the beginning of the levy. Starting in 2023 we expanded this existing best practice to the whole Levy to Move Seattle portfolio.



*From program-level (dozens of projects) to portfolio-level (thousands of projects) geospatial equity analysis.*

### Composition and use of the Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index

The Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index is a tool that combines information on race, ethnicity, and related demographics with data on socioeconomic and health disadvantages to identify where priority populations make up relatively large proportions of neighborhood residents.

The RSE Index is calculated and mapped at the census tract level. Census tracts are ranked based on proportion of priority population and categorized into five levels (or “quintiles”), described as “equity priority” levels, from 5, “highest equity priority,” to 1, “lowest equity priority.”



The RSE Index is used by departments across the City of Seattle to inform geographic prioritization decisions about City programs, planning efforts, and investments. Departments often consider the top two equity priority levels (“highest” and “second highest”) to be their “equity priority areas.”

#### Levy equity analysis and next steps

The current levy equity analysis shows us the distribution of individual projects or deliverables across each quintile of the RSE Index, from highest equity priority to lowest equity priority. For example, it shows that in 2023, about 46% of our levy investments were delivered in the highest and second-highest equity priority areas, which represent about 40% of the population and land area of Seattle. This suggests that we made more than a proportional investment in high equity priority areas in 2023, which aligns with our intended outcome of focusing investments in underinvested communities.

While we are encouraged by this finding, more work is needed to tell a complete story. The current levy equity analysis only tracks the distribution of individual deliverables, which can vary greatly in size and impact, from a single block-face of sidewalk repairs or a single curb ramp to the whole drainage partnership project completed in South Park or the whole RapidRide H corridor project in Delridge. For a clearer picture of the distribution of our investments, we will need to assess the distribution of our spending, which we are in the process of doing now.

We also want to introduce additional reference data beyond the RSE Index, which only helps us understand how our investments impact people who live near them, not people who travel to or through the areas we improve. We are looking to existing data sources such as the Puget Sound Regional Council’s Household Travel Survey to begin this type of analysis.

#### **Displacement Mitigation**

SDOT investments contributing to displacement, however unintentional, would be severely at odds with our intention to invest in and uplift communities that government has historically underinvested in.

The opportunities that come with significant, transformative projects are numerous, but with that comes the cumulative impacts, including displacement, that are felt by the communities who live and work in and around these projects, some of whom may not directly benefit from the project.

It is important for SDOT to continually improve leadership and staff awareness of this possible unintended consequence and to integrate displacement mitigation strategies into our investments, especially in neighborhoods experiencing high displacement risks. The [Displacement Risk Index](#) developed and maintained by Seattle’s Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) can help identify these areas of the city.

The TEF defines displacement as *when existing residents or, businesses or other organizations move from their current residence or location even though they do not wish to do so:*

- *Physical displacement* is the result of things such as eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing.
- *Economic displacement* occurs when residents and businesses can no longer afford escalating rents or costs of ownership and have to move out.
- *Cultural displacement* occurs when people move because their neighbors and culturally related

businesses that they want to be close to have left the area, or when culturally related businesses or institutions themselves move away. (Source: UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project)

SDOT's TEF tactics under the TEF Value of Land Use, Housing and Displacement can serve as a roadmap for staff to integrate anti-displacement mitigation strategies that our department can lead, or support in partnership with other departments, to accompany investments made in communities experiencing significant displacement pressure and/or risk. The TEF defines anti-displacement strategies as:

“Emphasizes community stability in the face of gentrification and displacement pressures as development occurs in a community and/or neighborhood. Anti-displacement strategies focus on improving and investing in communities without pushing people out, particularly centering Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities who have historically been most impacted as gentrification occurs in Seattle.”

If passed, implementation of the levy proposal can provide SDOT with the opportunity to integrate TEF Tactic 51.1 and implement anti-displacement mitigation strategies on levy-funded projects and programs. We can measure our impact by capturing the benefit to specific communities in SDOT implementing this anti-displacement strategies:

**TEF Value:** Land Use, Housing and Displacement

**Strategy:** Mitigating Transportation Growth

**TEF Tactic 51.1:** Identify and implement internal SDOT process to include equity and anti-displacement impact statements and mitigations as part of transportation capital projects and other initiatives.

Construction in neighborhoods can negatively impact our business community and is a concern we will need to partner with other departments and stakeholders. The levy can enable SDOT to be responsive to concerns from the business community regarding construction impacts. The following TEF tactic provides guidance on how to do this.

**TEF Value:** Economic Development

**Strategy:** Prevention

**Tactic 14.4:** Partner with City departments, foundations, and the private sector to identify paths to providing technical assistance, grants, and financial support opportunities directly to BIPOC businesses that are impacted by construction.

## **Partnership Strategies**

### Sharing Decision-Making

The TEW and SDOT subject-matter expert (SME) subcommittees for TEF Tactic 18.3 proposed development of a community-government steering group to further share decision-making power and partner with underinvested communities for levy investments made through the Neighborhood Initiated Safety Partnership Program. This proposed group could advise on program design and annual adjustments in response to evaluations. The proposed steering group could function as budget delegates, a key structure within a participatory budgeting process, and shape ideas into fundable proposals in partnership with SDOT for community vote. This proposed steering group would also vet

proposals for feasibility and cost. SDOT SMEs and TEW recommended that this group be compensated and comprise of 14-members with representation from:

- 2 reserved seats for current or past TEW members
- 8 seats for community members with lived and community experience in high RSE neighborhoods (CD 1,2,3,5)
- 2 seats for SDOT staff with experience in community participatory engagement or projects \*
- 1 seat for SDOT staff on Race & Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) Change Team \*
- 1 seat SDOT Staff in the Transportation Equity Implementation Intradepartmental Team\*

*\*Within 4 SDOT seats ensure perspective in: 1 transportation planner, 1 design, 1 engineer & 1 construction/crew are included.*

SDOT's relationship with the current and future oversight committee is another partnership strategy. Our collaboration with TEW on TEF Tactic 25.6 provided us with equity guidance on the make-up and representation of a future oversight committee, and we also have learnings from our relationship with the current Levy to Move Seattle Oversight Committee. Our hope is to codify in legislation an improved oversight committee model that includes representation of lived experiences of community members from equity priority areas, and a partnership with members to determine appropriate metrics and an evaluation structure to ensure the City is accountable to voters. Having a more diverse make-up and collaborative engagement with members on an evaluation structure can tee us up to ensure levy dollars are being distributed equitably and information shared transparently.

The Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) was established to monitor Levy to Move Seattle revenues, expenditures, and program and project implementation. We expect there to be an LOC to serve this same function for a future levy. The TEW and current LOC have made suggestions for how to better equip the future LOC to fulfill their important role and to ensure diverse perspectives on the future LOC. Numerous strategies, such as compensating members, adding seats on the LOC to ensure representation of lived experiences of community members from equity priority areas, and enhanced, broad recruitment, can help to welcome more diverse perspectives to the future LOC. There will be future discussions about how SDOT can continue to best equip the LOC for their responsibilities.

#### Sharing Our RSJI Practice & Process with Externals

Staff facilitated a pivotal circle process with a group of transportation advocates on September 27, 2023. The intention of this engagement was to provide advocates with an opportunity to experience SDOT's equity practice and better understand how SDOT integrates these tools into our day-to-day processes. Advocacy groups present included: Seattle Neighborhood Greenways (SNG), Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC), Cascade Bicycle Club, Puget Sound Sage, Commute Seattle, and Disability Rights WA.

Advocates had an opportunity to learn more about SDOT's Office of Equity and Economic Inclusion, the TEF, and the current LMS equity workplan before engaging in circle facilitated by SDOT staff. Our circle with the advocates centered on the following strategic questions for each advocate member to respond and share:

- *What type of power do you think you have?*
- *What would you say are your main mechanisms of power?*
- *From 0-100 how willing are you to share your power with those who don't have the same level of access as you?*

Some of the key themes that was shared from this circle included:

- Many are organizations that have been around for a long time and have built their advocacy and political power over the years.
- Acknowledgment that advocates are lucky to be compensated for their organizing and advocacy work via their organization.
- Leveraging connections to the media and network of stakeholders to push the City of Seattle to advance their advocacy agenda.
- Many are grassroots organizations with on the ground knowledge of the transportation needs of neighborhoods.

From this experience, we learned that educating and bringing transportation advocates into our RSJI work is key to our partnership. We recognize advocates are on their own equity journey and their organizations may not be practicing or thinking about equity the same way we are at SDOT. Given the power advocates have, it would be strategic and beneficial for us to continue to share our practice and push advocates to utilize the RSJI tools we use to further their own equity growth.

#### Commitment to Our Internal RSJI Practice

Taking a moment to pause and reflect is an important part of our internal RSJI practice. Through circle process, our funding plan management team carved time to reflect on equity within our area of service and our collective process. Our RSJI practice is a strategy that can have immediate impact and positive change so we can collectively as a team reflect and realign on our equity commitments for the levy proposal.

#### ***RET Working Circle #1 – October 20, 2023***

Staff in the funding plan management team engaged in our first RET working circle process to step through as a team the RET toolkit questions on creating racially equitable community outcomes. For each of the following RET questions, we utilized circle process to give every member of our team an opportunity to share:

*What are the greatest opportunities for creating change in the next year?* Some of the key themes shared in our circle included:

- Seattle Transportation Plan (STP)
  - As a key input to the levy proposal.
  - Leveraging partnerships built through the STP process.
- Organizational culture and practices
  - Opportunity to look at things that don't currently work.
  - Efficiently distribute resources.
  - Build up how we track our investments in equity.
  - Change how we measure our work and setting outcomes rather than widgets.
  - Be guides and facilitators as City staff to all stakeholders.
- Empowering staff and community
  - Increase decision-making outside of the funding plan management team.
  - Add decision-making capacity into participatory budgeting programs.
  - Empower people to take control of their transportation system.
- The overall way the department structures the transportation funding plan.
- Passing a transformative levy.

***What strengths does the department have that we can build on?***

Some of the key themes shared in our circle included:

- Seattle Transportation Plan (STP)
  - Partnerships, policy, and community engagement process.
- Internal Support and Offerings
  - RSJI practices and SDOT's Change Team.
  - Charismatic director to support with communications.
  - The LMS Equity portfolio.
  - Leadership commitment to advancing equity.
  - SDOT's capacity to deliver programs and projects.
  - Desire in the department to do better and how we impact communities.
  - Talented, dedicated staff who care and are willing to learn.
  - SDOT's growth and shift on how we engage with community.
- The Transportation Equity Framework (TEF) and partnership with TEW.

***What challenges, if met, will help move the department closer to racial equity goals?***

Some of the key themes shared in our circle included:

- Internal Practices and Processes
  - Holding ourselves accountable to implementing and delivering the STP
  - Documenting the STP 20-year vision, goals and key moves.
  - Continuing to champion equity from the top.
  - Embedding community engagement with our programs.
  - Balancing the tension between specificity and flexibility.
  - Managing time constraints.
  - Having a reiterative feedback loop with the community – not just the technical experts.
  - Staffing shortfall
- Stakeholder Management
  - Meeting and addressing and the conflict in visions from different groups.
  - Coming together to a collective consensus for all stakeholders.

Our circle process dovetailed into a robust conversation regarding stakeholder engagement. There are a significant number of transportation advocates and organizations who are actively engaged as stakeholders, and traditionally this group of stakeholders are the group to be involved in the campaigning process and advocating for specific transportation investments that their groups would like to see SDOT deliver.

Our team recognized that outside of this group there are many stakeholders and community members who do not have a voice in shaping the levy. From this insight, we then did an exercise to map the power and influence of a range of stakeholders from the SDOT modal boards, TEW, community-based organizations engaged in STP, transportation advocacy organizations, and business organizations to support us in better understanding how to navigate these relationships.

***RET Working Circle #2 – March 22, 2024***

Staff engaged in a second RET working circle with facilitation support and guidance from RSJI Change Team and SDOT OEEI RSJI Advisor. This specific circle process took place around two weeks before the release of the draft levy proposal during a particular time when stress was high for the team.

Eighteen staff members attended our circle process, and with RSJI Change Team's guidance, focused our circle process on the following guiding questions:

- In what ways does the current levy proposal result in the desired equity impact and meet the goals of service our most underinvested communities?
- What opportunities at SDOT do we have to uplift equity, either in the levy, during the launch of the levy (external engagement), or during the potential implementation?

Key takeaways from our circle were the following:

- Staff are incredibly invested in work that impacts neighborhoods. They are excited and interested in how we do community engagement (dedicated staff, prioritizing relational rather than transactional), resource allocation to high need areas, maintaining momentum (internally and externally), and communicating the equity work that we are doing or continuing to do.
- Staff cautioned about external interests that may conflict with equity work (project allocation, anti-tax sentiment, and disconnect with decision-makers who might interpret as a slush fund) and recommended socializing new people in power.
- There is an opportunity to highlight how equity is woven through the organization (internal processes that happen before projects happen), prioritization (areas with most need, areas that have historically been underinvested), project implementation (WMBE, high RSE index areas).
- Staff often focused on communicating and involving diverse community before (in their language, in their modes such as newspapers), during (with staff dedicated to cultivating relationships), and after (beyond widgets, with dashboards and flyers, etc.) project and program implementation.

Our circle provided the team with an opportunity to look ahead to the next coming weeks as the draft levy proposal went to the public and to consideration by the City Council. Our team, through circle, committed on the following:

- To uplift community voices
- Trust our collective wisdom and the values that we've centered in our work.
- Support one another and communicate when we need help.

## Step 5. Evaluate, Raise Racial Awareness, Be Accountable

### 5a. How will you evaluate and be accountable?

- *How will you evaluate and report impacts on racial equity over time?*
- *What is your goal and timeline for eliminating racial inequity?*
- *How will you retain stakeholder participation and ensure internal and public accountability?*
- *How will you raise awareness about racial inequity related to this issue?*

The Levy Oversight Committee (LOC), along with many other key stakeholders, asked SDOT to report on how transportation levies have improved outcomes, in addition to or in place of widgets. The levy proposal gives SDOT an opportunity to develop a measurement and evaluation structure of racial equity impacts that more effectively and efficiently provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful information about levy delivery and spending. This could take two forms:

## Racial Equity Toolkit: Draft Transportation Levy Proposal

- Process evaluation to support program implementation and improvements.
- Outcomes evaluation to demonstrate whether the program is leading to the desired results.

Developing a measurement and evaluation framework, and aligning on reporting with the future oversight committee, will set SDOT up for success in the future in multiple ways, including but not limited to:

- Creating a delivery reporting structure that is meaningful and an effective use of staff and volunteer oversight committee members.
- Building in opportunities to assess what is working and what is not working to make adjustments as needed, and to set expectations that adjustments are a reality for a multi-year program.

Our goal and timeline to eliminate racial inequity with levy funding would sync up with the levy proposal's duration of eight years, however, our department acknowledges that the STP is a 20-year vision, and we must hold ourselves accountable to delivering the equity goals in the STP; the levy proposal is just a piece of SDOT's larger funding puzzle.

Continuing to improve SDOT's capacity to assess geospatial distribution of investments for this levy proposal will allow us to evaluate and report what portion of levy investments is focused in high equity priority areas. Reporting publicly on this type of investment impacts can help us retain stakeholder participation and ensure internal and public accountability on how we are investing in underinvested communities and increasing transparency and accountability.

### **Recommended outcomes evaluation and reporting for the levy proposal**

- The levy proposal prioritization framework (and other prioritization frameworks at SDOT) should use the RSE Index as our standard equity data source/reference.
- SDOT should track the distribution of projects, spending, and impact/benefit, continually improving the sophistication of this quantitative levy equity analysis.
- SDOT should incorporate findings from this levy equity analysis into regular data storytelling with the public.
- SDOT should set a goal or a target direction of investment distribution (e.g., a certain percentage of investments should be made in the highest one or two equity priority quintiles), ideally in collaboration with communities that stand to be most impacted (positively or negatively) by large infrastructure investments.
- SDOT should integrate and report displacement mitigation strategies into large infrastructure investments in neighborhoods experiencing high displacement risk/pressure.
- SDOT should regularly report on the distribution of levy projects and spending.

Our goal with the levy proposal is to benefit equity priority areas and distribute levy related work to prioritize underinvested communities using OPCD's Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Index to inform distribution. We can do this by setting a goal for the total distribution of SDOT's funding plan, including revenue from the levy proposal, and prioritize allocation in disinvested neighborhoods as defined by the RSE index.

We can also consider reporting the impacts on racial equity and access to daily needs. We will need to

raise our own awareness and work with community to define destinations that constitute as “daily needs” and the accessibility of these within 30 minutes by walking, rolling, bicycling, and public transit for equity priority areas. One way we can consider evaluating this is by potentially using metric from the STP with an equity layer, as well as the RSE Index and which neighborhoods have access to “households within a 10-minute walk via sidewalks or a 5-minute ride via AAA bikeway or frequent transit.”

Another opportunity is for us to evaluate and report on the transportation connections that benefit and impact populations in high equity priority areas. One way we can consider evaluating this is through travel flow analysis with an equity framing.

Transportation is the second largest household expense, only behind housing. The percentage of a family’s income that is spent on transportation is highest for the lowest income earners: 8.2% for high-income and 15.7% for low-income (Source: Transportation Choices Coalition). We can consider evaluating and reporting how revenue from the levy proposal impacts the percentage a household income dedicates to transportation.

During implementation of the levy proposal, we will evaluate and report Women Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE) goals and outcomes on levy-funded projects and programs. We will retain stakeholder participation by ensuring project and program owners are doing their due diligence to work with WMBE contractors. Additionally, implementation of the levy proposal can bring further opportunities for SDOT continue to grow in our contracting equity practices such as accessible contracting and expanding our contracting opportunities with community members and non-profits.

## 5b. What is unresolved?

*What resources/partnerships do you still need to make changes?*

Anti-displacement and mitigation strategies is a topic that SDOT will need future partnership and practice support on how to integrate these into lines of business and operations. Due to legal limitations that come with our funding sources and complex land use policies, SDOT will need thought partnership support to help us think creatively on how to integrate these strategies. A potential opportunity is for us to closely partner with OPCD’s Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) work and their newly formed Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG will build an ETOD Strategy and Implementation Plan that will guide the City’s approach to development by advancing community-driven outcomes in neighborhoods surrounding light rail stations.

Measuring, evaluating and reporting beyond widgets on the levy proposal outcomes will be a continued discussion where we could partner with the future oversight committee to develop. SDOT’s Levy Equity Coordinator has built a foundation on equity analysis and processes that can be continued should the levy proposal pass.

A resource we need to have is an adequate internal data infrastructure to be able to properly track WMBE utilization, including WMBE subcontractors, of levy delivered projects and programs. Our current data system is not efficient at tracking levy funds and connecting them to contracts, which is our only current mechanism for tracking funds spent on WMBE contracts. We should be proactive prior to implementation of projects and programs associated with levy proposal funds to have the necessary data infrastructure so we can properly monitor and track our WMBE utilization.



The circle process is a foundational piece of RSJI work at SDOT, and it would be aspirational to share this practice with leadership, both within SDOT and the Mayor's office and CBO. In the case of the levy, it would have been with the Executive Steering Committee and Funding Plan Steering Committee, with facilitation support and guidance from RSJI Change Team and SDOT OEEI RSJI Advisors. The intention of this circle would be to uplift the items from circle processes at the staff level, equity themes and sharing RSJI practice of circle with this leadership team. In future collaborative decision-making processes, we would suggest using circle process to continue to foster our internal practice of transparency and accountability.

## Step 6. Report Back

*Share RET analysis and report responses from 5a and 5b with Department leadership, RSJI Advisor, Change Team leads and members involved in Step 1, and (if applicable) other teams/people working on your project, program, or policy.*

Our team hopes to uplift our RET findings with leadership staff in our Funding Steering Committee and Executive Steering Committee. City Council has also established a Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy with all nine councilmembers and a series of dates in May, June and July to discuss the levy proposal.

For anti-displacement mitigation strategies, we should partner closely with OPCD's ETOD team to align and identify where SDOT can support and advance the ETOD Strategy and Implementation Plan that the CAG will develop. We can also engage with the OPCD team and partner on circle discussions and strategic questioning exercises to bolster our department's knowledge on anti-displacement principles and strategies.

Measuring, evaluating and reporting outcomes on the levy proposal should also engage project and program owners for their buy-in and support as they will ultimately be the leads in delivering these. We should also continue to partner with the RSJI Change Team during implementation of the levy proposal as our internal accountability body to ensure we are meeting our intended outcomes for the levy proposal. Additionally, it is important that our department continues to staff a Levy Equity Coordinator position for implementation of the levy proposal so we can have a designated staff who will lead regular equity analysis and process improvements.

Our need for an improved internal data infrastructure to track levy funds and WMBE utilization will have to be elevated to SDOT leadership and close coordination with the Levy Proposal Project and Portfolio Management Team, as we will need direction, investment and coordination on a system that will work department wide.

## Racial Equity Toolkit: Draft Transportation Levy Proposal

### Appendix

- Funding Plan TEF Tactic Tracker: [Funding Plan TEF Tactic Tracker.xlsx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Levy to Move Seattle Oversight Committee Recommendation on next levy: [LMS LOC Recommendations on next levy - March 2024.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Paving the Way: Analyzing the Impact of Taxes on
- Low-Income & BIPOC Communities in Seattle: [Final Report EvansTaxImpact.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Mayor Harrell's Recommended Seattle Transportation Plan: [STP Part I MayorsRecommendedPlan 02 2024.pdf \(seattle.gov\)](#)