

TAB Meeting (3/27/2024)

Meeting Notes

- Agenda
- Members in Attendance
- Public Comment Time
- Approval of Previous Minutes
- SDOT Vision Zero Update Presentation
- Aurora Ave Project Update
- King County Metro (KCM) Service Planning Updates
- Board Business & Committee Updates

Members in Attendance

Carolin Tillinger

Priya Balan

Art K

Ashwin Bhumbla

Zach

Sierra Brown

Dana C

Carolyn B

Braxton Williams

Josh

Sandro Pani

Dan A Anderson

Greg spotts

Tre P

Matt Yarrow

Guest (Member of public)

Public Comment Time

No public comments

Approval of Previous Minutes

No comments.

Zach motions to approve, Art and Braxton seconds.

Unanimously passes.

SDOT Draft Levy proposal Presentation

Presenter:

Greg Soptts
Dan A Anderson

- April 4th Draft transportation Levy proposal was released by the Mayor. Right now it's open for public comments, ending on April 26th. Mayor will be introducing his legislation to the council.
- Current - 930m over 9 years. New - Now rescaled to 1.2 Billion for 8 years considering inflation.
- But the mayor put 1.35 Billion, which is 11% more. The overall framing of the levy package is to maintain and modernize.
For example, Ballard 15th Ave project, adding landscape median island etc, and improving accessibility to bus stops.
- More sophisticated asset management energy now.
- There's a lot of transit spot improvements, bus optimization project for 36 Bus routes.
- In 2015, KCM had 7 corridors that they wanted to change into rapid rides. Not all ended up becoming Rapid rides and some ended up becoming transit improvement projects.
- We are also doing transit spot improvements based on the Seattle Transit Measure.

Dan Anderson:

Agenda

- How transportation levy proposal invests in transit
- Inputs that informed draft levy proposal
- Present current draft transportation levy proposal
- Questions & Discussions

Program investments specifics:

- We are continuing to do all the work in transit lanes and transit signals. Very much expansive when we think about transit.
- Want to make sure there are good crosswalks, sidewalks, curb ramps.
- Top line focuses are bridges, sidewalks, and connection to light rails, as echoed by the public and mentioned as their priority.

- Looking at 160 transit spot improvements, and some signature proposal projects like SLU East west connection, Rainier ave, 4th Ave, Rapid Ride junction.
- Vision around safety - for seniors, kids, people with disabilities.

Draft Transportation levy renewal proposal

Summary -

- Proposing 1.35 for 8 years and would focus on keeping Seattle connected and keep the city growing.
- Since 2006, the previous levies have helped SDOT deliver a lot of improvements and developments - like sidewalk improvements, crosswalks, Safe routes to school, trees planted and a lot more.

Input to the draft :

- Safety commitment - crashes, fatalities and injuries are all on the rise. Levy will focus on how to make streets safer.
- Asset management - From an organizational standpoint, is the asset management strategy. Look thoroughly at what to focus on - bridges, sidewalks, street pavements, roads etc.
- Community input - People want safe streets , without driving and see improvements in an equitable way.
- Affordability - Added this because, the relationship between the property taxes and housing affordability in particular.

Cost to Taxpayers :

- Used homes because it's a taxpayer assessment.

Levy proposal investments - examples :

- Repave and modernize at least 15 of our busiest streets, improving them for people to walk, roll, bike, and take transit
- Support construction of 250 blocks of new sidewalks and repair 34,000 sidewalk defects
- Build 160 projects that improve transit reliability, equity, and safety
- Upgrade 30% of existing protected bike lanes with better bike barriers
- Install more pedestrian lighting in neighborhood business districts and at transit

stops .

- Talking more about pedestrian lighting - so people can feel safe and comfortable walking in streets.

Vision Zero and School Safety:

- 12 safety corridors on the High Injury Network and Traffic calming treatments on 50 corridors.
- 10,000 accessible curb ramps goal in the 8 years of the levy.
- 9 stairway repairs to connect our hilly neighborhoods. Want to make sure the stairways are as easy to use as possible.

Bicycle safety:

- Make sure there is enough staffing to do bike lane maintenance throughout the years.
- Really focusing on gaps in the network. We are focusing on low hanging fruits, and we are challenged with high hanging fruits. Some of the highway crossings and sidewalks are dangerous for crossing.

Major street maintenance:

- Most valuable asset. The paving is where the most of the maintenance and modernization approach goes. Good example is - Madison through the G Line project, which will look completely different.
- Responsive maintenance repairs of potholes and road conditions.
- 9 full-depth street reconstructions with improvements for all modes of travel. 5 preventative maintenance paving corridor projects - Grind and pave with asphalt and concrete along the corridor.

Bridges and structures:

- Bridges and structures are the 2nd largest project 218 m dollars.
- Upgrade electricals on Ballard, Magnolia and university bridge. These bridges are really old and we want to be sure the bridges are functional and good. For example, when the west seattle bridge went down there was a major disruption in the transportation and connectivity.

Transit Corridors and Connections :

- Improve connections to new and existing Link light rail stations. 2 new east-west transit corridors providing access to new light rail stations at N 130th St and Alaska Junction.

- 160 projects, such as transit-only lanes or special signals at busy intersections, to improve reliability on the busiest routes. It's all about reliability.
- Candidate projects discussion on the map.
- Creating a bus priority in the corridor in Slu East West corridors, already working on the walk/bike path when the light rail stations open.

Signals and operations :

With modern technology, we can have modern signals and cabinets allow for accessibility improvements and remote signal timing changes.

Freight and goods improvements:

- Improve corridors and bridges that trucks use when traveling to and from Port of Seattle facilities and between the city's manufacturing and industrial center.
- Partnership paving projects with the Port of Seattle to improve the streets that carry the heaviest vehicles

Climate and resiliency :

We have introduced New Strategies for up to 3 low-pollution neighborhoods, including low-emissions. Goods delivery in areas most impacted by climate change and pollution.

Neighborhood street improvements :

It can be challenging to have new improvements built in the neighborhood. We are trying to build sidewalks, plazas.

People streets and public spaces:

8 transformed public spaces with redesigned streets, seating, wayfinding, lighting, and activation, including lighting at transit plazas and stops.

Dozens of spot improvements and pilot projects with a focus on equity priority areas.

Maintenance and ongoing activation support for public spaces citywide

Timeline Overview:

Started working this March, right now we are at "Mayor's draft proposal" stage in April, final proposal in May.

Ways to engage - Contact Dan Anderson or Carolyn B or email MoveSeattle@seattle.gov

Questions and comments :

Sandro Pani -

How is the city guaranteeing that levy money won't be shifting and they are not always equitable?

The World Cup is coming to Seattle. The all star game last is a good example, we made improvements for that. We already have those elements, to have maintenance and improvements in those areas. We will have legislation and dictate and set some rules around spending. There is plenty of oversight and review.

Regarding bridges, they continue to be big items that need maintenance. What are the other sources of funding? Why don't we keep the critical funding to transit, bike and walk improvements.

We are putting the money into the planning process to look into additional funding and maintenance. We need funding for more maintenance, and trying to create a program to give it to decision makers to make a decision in terms of maintenance of the bridges and sea walls in the long term.

Carolyn T

Supportive of the entities contributing funds for these permitting. Does levy leverage other opportunities for funds like that?

Affordability input in the levy is that, equitability. If the low income population can live car free it would be a great advantage for them. And housing and connectivity to light rail is a major focus. Take both the idea of public private partnership and how the levy funding call falls in that. We have elections come up this year, and west coast states are getting funding and looking for leveraging the other funding.

Zach

How does Bigger arterial projects work? For example Aurora there is also a project - how does this levy's funding go into that. Because Aurora is already a huge project.

With this levy proposal, our current proposal is 30m \$ for the Aurora project and then 10 of that would go to sidewalk updates in Aurora itself.

Art

If in Nov the levy is not approved, what is plan B? And how long would it take us to get such a huge funding.

Plan B is probably called the "Current law budget". The city requires its department to work on the budget they require. The department has to submit a budget since there is no levy in place. There would be reduction in services and projects.

Dana C

Climate change response framework - it was very ambitious and the goals were set for 2030 and it is 6 years from now. With goals that ambitious, how is this levy and all the projects included, how are they actively pursuing this ? We know transportation is the largest pollution emission factor.

Part of the challenge with rolling out this levy, we are a bit limited in what we can talk about. This entire levy is in response to the climate response framework. Making streets safer and so were moving them towards sustainable transportation modes.

Ashwin -

Especially with the climate response framework, there's a need for some kind of reframing. We need to be pragmatic. Politically it's going to be harder to tell people to reduce driving, and we have to make better alternate transportation commute options. When you say the current levy goes as far as it can, I don't see it the same way. I don't see anything in the levy that would get us anywhere close to the climate response goals.

In terms of fatalities, crashes, and injuries, we discussed that the numbers don't look good. Did you happen to have any learnings/ take outs as to what has been the reason the numbers don't seem to go down as much as we want it to ?

The current levy did focus on safety, takeaways - multi lane arterials, That's where the fatalities go up. We see the trends going in the wrong directions but the data is going in the right direction. It's proof that these strategies are effective, we want to do more, but we are trying to be as strategic as possible.

Fix the route 8

Presenter: Nick

Nick volunteers at the Central Seattle Greenways. Partners with Seattle union to launch this campaign.

- The neighborhood 8 runs in are dense neighborhoods. The route also gives pretty vital cross town connections. Connects to Mt Baker in the south, connects to SLU, Belltown, Cap hill and uptown.
- Ridership has gone up significantly. Take the amount of riders and adjust it with the service hours and it's not the actual ridership. This shows the productivity of the route.

Problems facing Route 8:

- Not reliable at all, it's always late. Every summer reliability l=plummets and in the winter it gets better.
- It's late by 15 mins at this point.
- Amazon's return to office affected the traffic congestion in Denny way and SLU and affected the route 8's reliability.
- Other thing is, it is also really slow. People have started making more mid-day trips. Midday speeds have declined ~10% since 2019.
- Despite an EB bus lane installed in 2018, Route 8 travels at about a walking pace at PM rush
- One of the big ask is the bus lanes. The problem is not more cars, rather, the cars in the same lane as the bus, and the bus stops for passengers and slows down the lane.

Fix the L8 campaign- sent letters and there are articles in the Urbanist, in blogs and social media. Interacted with a lot of riders,

Projects in the area:

- Denny way repaving - Denny way is being repaved this year but SDOT is not living up to the spirit of the Complete Streets Ordinance
- Construction related lane reductions probably means reliability will be worse this summer.

Route 8 Traffic analysis:

- SDOT has told us they're doing a corridor-wide traffic analysis for possible spot improvements in 2025.
- Bus lane in the Denny way would be a very large transit spot improvement project. Unclear what's possible with spot improvement money.

Seattle Transportation Plan:

- City Council STP amendment: Council "anticipates [a levy to] improve on-time performance of transit in the Denny Way corridor".
- Denny is slated for a "Large Capital Project" (>10M) in the STP.

Harrison Mercer St Project:

- \$30M Project to make Harrison a 'Transit Street'.
- Harrison is not particularly easy as well. It has a lot of parking garages. From a rider's perspective, one bus twice as frequent is better than parallel ones half as frequent.
- Even if they have funding, it would be difficult to put a bus on that corridor, since KCM is also going through a driver shortage for a while now.

Questions and comments :

If you are having a curbside bus lane, would it cause friction to the traffic especially when a car has to cross over the bus ?

Ans: The bus comes only every 5 to 10 minutes, the cars in the left lane will cut through to go over the right lane.

Zach:

Biggest complaints, everything needs a study. It would be nice to have a bus lane. Do any of the coalitions have got any proposals ?

Ans: We haven't really thought about it in terms of a design. This is not just a reliability thing, it boosts services and increases ridership as well.

About Harrison, if Denny is improved then Harrison may not be needed. But still feel that it could be better to have the Harrison corridor route. For example if coming from Ballard and need to go to SLU, there are no direct connections.

Ans: Definitely a good idea, it is going to be fast and reliable. If it's frequent, then it will be very easy to have better connectivity.

Art: How can a group like the TAB assist you in getting things moving ?

Started this campaign last fall, and we did not get enough response when called regarding the campaign.

Examples of other routes:

67 and 65

44

Board Business & Committee Updates

- As a presentation follow up, there is draft feedback for Levy. Bike Advisory board members reached out to Ashwin, to have sent a letter by all boards regarding the draft levy proposal.
- Let us give their input and have this draft ready to send.
- Motion to approve this letter (Levy response letter) pending the edits. Zach motions, Dana and Josh seconds. Motion unanimously passes. Art and Ashwin will work with the Bike Board to work on the proposal.
- Updates : Seattle Transportation Plan has been implemented.
- No announcements.