



**Seattle**  
Department of  
Transportation

**TAB Members:**

Priyadarshini Balan  
Ashwin Bhumbra  
Zachary Burton  
Dana Coppernoll-Houston  
Josh Hirschland  
Art Kuniyuki  
Sandro Pani  
Carolyn Tillinger  
Braxton Williams

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board shall **advise** the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the City **on matters related to transit** and the possible and actual impact of actions taken by the City upon all forms of public transportation.

The Board shall be provided the opportunity to comment and make recommendations on City policies, plans, and projects as they may relate to **transit capital improvements, transit mobility, and transit operations** throughout the City...

The Board shall help facilitate City policies, plans, and projects that support local and region-wide transit mobility efforts, to help **ensure a functioning and coordinated transit system** throughout the City and region.

The Board shall function as the **public oversight committee of revenues collected under Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD) Proposition 1**, as described in Resolution 12 of the STBD...

The Board shall make an annual report to the City Council on the status of its work program and the achievement of its goals.

**City Council Resolution**  
**31572**

**City of Seattle**  
**Seattle Transit Advisory Board**

June 28, 2024

**To:** Councilmember Saka and the members of the Select Committee on the 2024 Transportation Levy

**Cc:** Mayor Bruce Harrell, SDOT Director Greg Spotts, SDOT Deputy Director Francisca Stefan

**Re:** Transportation Levy Proposed Amendments, TAB Feedback

Dear Councilmembers,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB) would like to submit its comments and opinions on the upcoming Transportation Levy as the Seattle City Council is considering approving the Levy and moving it forward to the November 2024 election.

We understand that there are announced amendments and perhaps more to come from City Councilmembers, but none will have the impact of the Chair's Amendments, which have added \$100M to the Mayor's version of the Levy submitted to the City Council, and by default the Transportation Committee.

The TAB supports the Chair's Amendments and generally also support amendments from other Councilmembers which increase the monies being put into this levy so long as the amendments allocate additional funds into supporting all modes of transportation. Explicitly, **the TAB would support amendments that bring more funds to increase transit availability and frequency**, as the base Levy's promise of spot improvements and two improved bus routes falls short of what we'd hope to see invested into transit over the next 8 years.

We will also note that the Chair has proposed a brand new "Good Governance & Equitable Implementation Initiative" category for \$7.5M, with four key items:

1. Ensure those qualified for property tax breaks are actually receiving them through new property tax outreach and education programs.

2. Creation of better oversight of spending by prioritizing data transparency of SDOT with a "results dashboard" and other interactive tools.
3. The granting of auditing power to the Levy Oversight Committee, backed by resources for professional services to support their work.
4. We need a longer term, more sustainable approach to fund our massive transportation network and aging infrastructure, by the creation of a Financial Task Force with broad authority to address and fund our crumbling roads, along with sidewalks and bridges.

The TAB understands the Chair's intent with these four key items and supports their inclusion in the final Levy proposal.

<b>2024 TRANSPORTATION LEVY (\$M's)</b>	<b>Mayor's Proposed</b>	<b>Mayor's Revised</b>	<b>Chair's Amend.</b>	<b>Change\$</b>
Vision Zero & School Safety	\$ 107	\$ 162	\$ 160.5	\$ (1.5)
Major Street Maintenance	\$ 423	\$ 423	\$ 423	\$ -
Bridges & Structures	\$ 218	\$ 221	\$ 221	\$ -
Transit Corridors & Connections	\$ 121	\$ 145	\$ 151	\$ 6.0
Pedestrian Programs	\$ 109	\$ 135	\$ 193	\$ 58.0
Signals & Operations	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ -
Bike Safety Program	\$ 94	\$ 114	\$ 114	\$ -
People Streets & Public Spaces	\$ 57	\$ 66	\$ 66	\$ -
Climate & Resiliency	\$ 49	\$ 59	\$ 69	\$ 10.0
Neighborhood Street Improvements	\$ 48			\$ -
Freight & Goods Movement	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 45	\$ 20.0
Good Governance & Equitable Implementation Initiative (new)			\$ 7.5	\$ 7.5
	<b>\$ 1,351</b>	<b>\$ 1,450</b>	<b>\$ 1,550</b>	<b>\$ 100</b>

And now, let's look at the other line items and the TAB's thoughts on them:

**Vision Zero & School Safety:** While we are awaiting the final version of the Vision Zero plan, we must reduce deaths on our roads and transportation services. Recent events show that school safety is an on-going issue for our youngest and most innocent, so we fully support the Chair's increased funding of Safe Routes to Schools programs. However, we are disappointed with the decrease of monies allocated towards Vision Zero and School Safety overall and would encourage amendments allocating more funding in this area.

**Major Street Maintenance:** With or without the Transportation Levy, street maintenance is always needed to keep our roads functioning and safe. Since this is already the biggest budgeted item, we would add a minimal amount through any amendments as again, we believe there are other items that have a greater need for more funding.

**Bridges & Structures:** We appreciate that the Chair has not increased this item since realistically, there isn't any amount brought in by a Levy that could solve the issue of modernizing and retrofitting the numerous bridges and structures in Seattle. As others have said, the cost of fixing this problem would

far exceed any simple Transportation Levy and the billions needed would not be sustainable or approved by voters. This is something that requires federal government assistance for all states, counties, and cities, so we'd leave it to our congressional delegation to resolve this at that level.

**Transit Corridors & Connections:** With a rapidly increasing population and goals defined in the Seattle Transportation Plan to have fewer trips made in Single Occupancy Vehicles(SOVs), we must offer and fund more transit services. METRO CONNECTS and other studies have shown that "frequency" of service is one of the most important factors in attracting riders to public transportation. Thus, investments in frequency and reliability are needed on a much greater scale provided by the Levy in its current state. Spot improvements and only two specific routes targeted for improvements is simply not ambitious enough for Seattle's largest ever levy. We urge an amendment outlining specific projects not just focusing on rider safety, but also on increasing efficiency of the system. With Sound Transit expanding the Link Light Rail system, more RapidRide routes planned, and ridership rapidly rebounding, the iron is hot. Increasing the Levy amount through additional amendments favoring transit is not only justifiable, it is necessary.

**Pedestrian Programs:** The TAB supports the increase in Pedestrian Program funding. Specifically near new light rail stations, new housing density and additional transit riders who will be coming through warrant significant investment to ensure safety. New lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, signals, and signage are critical to ensure pedestrians and cyclists are able to safely connect to transit. **We encourage careful examination of how the interplay between these modes can be promoted.**

**Signals & Operations:** We agree with a flat-line approach, and assume that with or without a levy, a normal annual budget would include monies for the care and maintenance of this item.

**Bike Safety Program:** We don't disagree with the flat-line budget for this item, but if the total Levy amount could increase, we would support increasing funding towards this item. Seattle is known for its biking community and as we work on a Vision Zero goal, supporting bike safety is a "no brainer" – it's really how much we're willing to fund it.

**People Streets & Public Spaces:** We believe that this is still an idea in testing stage, so we support the flat-line budget, and if the levy is increased in the future, modest increases could be made. We support increasing the amount allocated towards improving Pedestrian Lighting as ensuring safe travel to and from transit stops has always been a priority for the TAB.

**Climate & Resiliency:** Seattle is definitely a leader in various environmental issues, and we support any increases in funding for the future. We refer once more to the Climate Change Response Framework of the STP which both correctly identifies SOV emissions as by far the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Seattle and recommends a mode shift away from SOVs as the most impactful way to fight the issue. That is why the TAB would like to call out again that **more than any amount of trees planted or EV charging stations supplied, encouraging mode shift by investing heavily in and prioritizing alternate transportation modes is by far the most impactful and targeted investment Seattle can**

**make against climate change.** Electric vehicle infrastructure might help reduce some emissions, but would it do so more than encouraging mode shift through bus route improvements, better sidewalks, etc.? The TAB does not believe so and we would welcome and support any amendment that allocates funding accordingly.

**Freight & Goods Movement:** This is an overlooked item, but could prove problematic if not addressed now with this Levy and the STP. As such, the increase in the Chair's Amendment is welcome. SDOT is currently working on tests of road sharing with pedestrians, bikes, buses, and freight in congested corridors while already planning solutions for the future. Any change to traffic patterns, road configurations, signals, and the like will take money and planning so this is a great beginning.

Thank you for reading our thoughts and comments on a valuable and needed Transportation Levy for our city. As we mentioned at the beginning of this letter, the TAB would love to see the amount asked for to increase, but are willing to accept moving from a starting point of \$1.35B to \$1.55B and getting started on improving the transportation needs of Seattle.

Sincerely yours,

**The Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB)**

Ashwin Bhumbra, Art Kuniyuki – Co-Chairs

Zach Burton – Vice-Chair

Priya Balan - Secretary