



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

**TAB, STP IP
Subcommittee**

Members:

Ashwin Bhumbala
Zachary Burton
Art Kuniyuki
Carolyn Tillinger

*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,

STP Implementation Plan Subcommittee

September 16, 2025

To: Sarah Strand, SDOT Policy & Planning

Re: Seattle Transportation Plan 2025 Implementation Plan Feedback

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for sharing the STP Implementation Plan. The TAB has created a subcommittee to quickly respond. Our feedback will not cover every aspect of the 3-year plan, but we have chosen to highlight key actions and sections that are more relevant to the TAB and STM responsibilities and topics that have been presented to the TAB.

The TAB has made climate, environment, and sustainability a core focus in recent years. As this is one of the six key STP Goals and Key Moves, we would like to highlight how transit now and into the future will be a key component of this and why it is important to us.

The use of single occupancy vehicles (SOV) and fossil fuel-powered vehicles (trucks, cars, buses, trains, etc.) are not sustainable long-term and cannot remain viable solutions for the future. Since the TAB watches over transit vehicles, we are fully supportive of all measures that SDOT and the STP use to promote moving towards increasing transit ridership, purchasing new electric and hybrid-powered vehicles, and supporting maintenance and hiring practices to ensure these vehicles remain on the road.

The health of our communities are undermined when transportation contributes to poor air quality, relies on fossil fuels, and adds pollution from idling vehicles on our roads. The safety of our communities is at risk when single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs), which are responsible for the vast majority of traffic accidents, continue to be catered to and prioritized in our transportation system. The future of our region, which is rapidly growing and shows no signs of slowing down, is a future of gridlock so long as we assume that every person who moves here will rely on SOVs for their transportation needs, a geometric impossibility considering the limited space we have in our public right of way. We fully understand that these solutions will take planning

and dollars to implement. The TAB stands ready to advocate and support these efforts in our written responses to those responsible for obtaining these funds and services.

With this in mind, here is feedback and questions the TAB has responding to specific items in the STP Implementation Plan.

Spot Initiatives – Prepare for the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup

SDOT is planning temporary street closures near key areas for pedestrian zones. Are any of these considered to be made permanent? Will SDOT be studying the effect of pedestrianization on nearby traffic patterns? We encourage SDOT to treat many of the changes during the FIFA World Cup as pilot programs, taking note of impact. We encourage SDOT to be bold in maintaining pedestrianization and transit priority after the event's end. If these changes are good enough for the world at large, why can't they be good enough for Seattle?

Key Move – Foster neighborhood vitality and improved community health

The TAB has been briefed on Low Pollution Neighborhoods in the past. We welcome the spirit of this project and encourage its development. We do, however, find the details in the Implementation Plan frustratingly vague. There are three LPNs but they are not specified. When it comes to what measures will actually define the LPNs, there are examples of what *could* be done but not what *will* be done. LPNs have been in the conversation for just about *eight years* and we are no closer to any knowledge of what will actually be done and where. The reasoning behind LPNs cites worse health outcomes and unsafe traffic environments. But so far, the pace at which SDOT has been developing this project has not matched the urgency of its justification. And if after what looks like over ten years of development, what we get is only something like e-bike rebates, as the Implementation Plan implies, that will only be able to be described as bitterly disappointing and needlessly wasteful. The TAB encourages bold measures such as pedestrianizing spaces that the neighborhood is interested in reclaiming. Actual meaningful change is what will make the long wait worth it and we look forward to seeing more of what SDOT has in store.

With the "car-free pilot" effectively in place for Pike Place Market over the last couple of months due to ongoing utility work, has SDOT collected enough data to publicly state its findings on impact to Market safety, throughput, and commerce? The TAB is a strong advocate for a pedestrianized Pike Place and would like to know the performance of the pilot and what learnings SDOT has taken from it.

Key Move – Advance mobility management strategies to encourage walking, biking, and transit trips

In regards to the Paid Street Parking program, adjusting parking rates based on demand to make parking more available seems counterproductive to the goal of encouraging people to use transit and other modes of transportation that aren't cars. Parking should be expensive and not highly available. In the Transit Element of the STP, there is a goal set to increase the percent of trips made by transit to 28% by 2044. On top of making transit more frequent and reliable, parking for single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) needs to be expensive and not highly available to accomplish this goal and force people to make necessary mode shifts.

Key Move – Create world class access to transit and support making service more frequent and reliable

The Seattle Transit Measure and its use in boosting service, providing ORCA cards via the Transportation Access Program, and developing transit capital projects is an incredible success. Extra trips on weekends for high-use routes, such as the Route 8, is a fantastic use of funds, improving the way this city moves not just for commuting purposes, but also for recreation. Safety and transit access projects such as on S Jackson Street are a great idea, improving access to the major transit hub of the city. The TAB looks forward to hearing proposals from SDOT on what a renewed STM will look like.

However, when it comes to "making service more frequent and reliable" we find the Implementation Plan, and SDOT's long-term vision, to be underdeveloped. The TAB gave feedback for the Transportation Levy, which is undoubtedly the funding source for a majority of transportation projects in the near future, when it was still being developed that it did not have enough specific improvements for transit frequency and reliability. The Transportation Levy calls out transit spot improvements (though it doesn't specify what a single one will be) and two routes that SDOT will study for improvements as the main concrete transit performance improvements for the 10-year lifetime of the Levy. That is not nearly ambitious enough for a package that SDOT has described as the largest investment in transportation in the city's history.

The TAB was hoping the STP Implementation plan would finally bring some specificity to the vague improvements laid out in the Levy as well as make concrete SDOT's claims of wanting to improve transit and induce mode shift. That is not here.

The Implementation Plan states that SDOT will work with Metro on options to improve reliability for Route 8. We now know that SDOT has thrown in the towel and given up on any hope of actually fixing Route 8 performance. Despite a great amount of what we now see as theater from SDOT and the Mayor's office in claiming to take a closer look at improving Route 8, SDOT recently publicly revealed a plan that included a bus lane for two blocks on Denny and the restriction of right turns from Westlake onto Denny. SDOT knows, and the public knows, that these are half measures that will do nothing to meaningfully improve Route 8 performance so long as there is not a dedicated bus lane down the length of Denny Way. Despite claiming to favor mode shift, SDOT refused to make the only change that will help Route 8 reliability as they believe it will negatively affect SOV traffic time. It is also worth noting, almost unbelievably, that SDOT has stated that their modeling of traffic impact *did not factor in mode shift at all*. So to fix a problem that can only be fixed by having fewer cars on the road and thus can only be fixed by inducing mode shift, SDOT refuses to induce mode shift based on an analysis that does not factor in mode shift. It is a complete abdication of responsibility and when faced with an opportunity to deliver an enormous increase to transit reliability and frequency for a relatively low cost, SDOT has refused without even trying. It is disappointing that improvements to Route 8 are the only specific future improvements to a route mentioned in the Implementation Plan, even more so now that we know the improvements are mere half measures.

The rest of the plan does not look any better in this regard. SDOT calls out a new Transit Performance Policy to prioritize upgrades and signal improvements. The TAB welcomes any improvement to metrics and decision-making but calling out an improved way to measure performance as one of the very few

ways SDOT is saying it is improving transit performance, does not engender confidence. As the Route 8 debacle shows, there are many situations where we *know* how the transit is performing. We even know the best way to fix it. But none of that means anything if SDOT is too scared to make the bold changes that will actually improve things.

Finally, SDOT calls out its partnership with Sound Transit in planning for light rail expansions such as West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension (WSBLE) as part of the ST3 program. We welcome proactive planning to ensure that these projects do not go any further over budget and behind schedule. However, facts are facts, and Sound Transit has proven itself completely incapable in managing this project responsibly (an opinion not just shared by the TAB, but by independent auditors brought in to judge Sound Transit's performance), with numerous delays in decision-making resulting in what is now tens of billions of dollars worth of a budget deficit which will undoubtedly result in major project refactoring and further timeline pushbacks. With this in mind, the TAB is again disappointed to see a project decades in the making be used as an example of how SDOT is improving transit reliability over the next three years. Planning for the decades ahead is good and needed, but the Implementation Plan is supposed to show how SDOT in the near future is also going to improve transportation for Seattle and its citizens *now*.

When it comes to transit frequency and reliability, the Implementation Plan, and seemingly SDOT's vision for what it can accomplish in the near future, is woefully inadequate. The TAB would like to see SDOT match the rhetoric of urgency it employs for the legitimate pressing needs for equity, health, safety, and sustainability in our transportation system with tangible action.

Key Move – Co-create with enhance public spaces for playing and gathering to improve community health

The TAB would like to see turning seasonal street closures into permanent street closures and pedestrianization projects. For example:

- o ***Farmers Market in Ballard*** - Ballard Ave NW between 22nd Ave NW and 20th Ave NW
- o ***Farmers Market in Capitol Hill*** - E Denny Way between Broadway E and Nagle PL
- o ***Capitol Hill Superblock / Eco-District*** - E Pike St between Broadway and 12th Ave
- o ***Bell Street in Belltown*** - Bell Street between 1st Ave and 5th Ave

Sincerely yours,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB)

STP Implementation Plan Subcommittee