



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy

Agenda

(or after the Transportation Committee meeting)

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

10:30 AM

City Hall, Council Chambers
600 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98104

Rob Saka, Chair
Joy Hollingsworth, Vice-Chair
Robert Kettle, Member
Cathy Moore, Member
Tammy J. Morales, Member
Sara Nelson, Member
Maritza Rivera, Member
Dan Strauss, Member
Tanya Woo, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8801; Rob.Saka@seattle.gov

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May 21, 2024 - 10:30 AM
(or after the Transportation Committee meeting)

Meeting Location:

City Hall, Council Chambers, 600 4th Ave, Seattle, WA 98104

Committee Website:

<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/select-committee-on-the-2024-transportation-levy>

This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.

Members of the public may register for remote or in-person Public Comment to address the Council. Details on how to provide Public Comment are listed below:

Remote Public Comment - Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the meeting at

<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>

Online registration to speak will begin one hour before the meeting start time, and registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting. Speakers must be registered in order to be recognized by the Chair.

In-Person Public Comment - Register to speak on the Public Comment sign-up sheet located inside Council Chambers at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting start time. Registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting. Speakers must be registered in order to be recognized by the Chair.

Pursuant to Council Rule VI.C.10, members of the public providing public comment in Chambers will be broadcast via Seattle Channel.

Submit written comments to Councilmembers at Council@seattle.gov.

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

A. Call To Order

B. Approval of the Agenda

C. Public Comment

D. Items of Business

1. [CB 120788](#) **AN ORDINANCE relating to transportation; providing for the submission to the qualified electors of the City at an election to be held on November 5, 2024, a proposition authorizing the City to levy regular property taxes for up to eight years in excess of the limitation on levies in chapter 84.55 RCW for the purpose of providing City facilities and services, including transportation improvements, both capital and operating, with possible debt financing; creating a new oversight committee; applying RCW 84.36.381's senior citizens and disabled persons exemption; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.**

Attachments: [Att A - Transportation Levy Spending Breakdown](#)

Supporting Documents: [Summary and Fiscal Note](#)
[Central Staff Memo](#)
[Presentation \(5/21/24\)](#)

Briefing and Discussion

Presenter: Calvin Chow, Council Central Staff

E. Adjournment



Legislation Text

File #: CB 120788, **Version:** 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

AN ORDINANCE relating to transportation; providing for the submission to the qualified electors of the City at an election to be held on November 5, 2024, a proposition authorizing the City to levy regular property taxes for up to eight years in excess of the limitation on levies in chapter 84.55 RCW for the purpose of providing City facilities and services, including transportation improvements, both capital and operating, with possible debt financing; creating a new oversight committee; applying RCW 84.36.381’s senior citizens and disabled persons exemption; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.

WHEREAS, Seattle is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan to accommodate a population expected to approach nearly a million people by 2044 served by an abundant supply of housing concentrated in walkable, mixed-use, transit-rich Regional Centers, Urban Centers and Neighborhood Centers that will need to be served by a more robust and modern transportation system that is well-maintained, safe, sustainable, and multi-modal; and

WHEREAS, the draft One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Update foresees 158,000 added jobs in Seattle over the next 20 years that will require a more efficient transportation system to ensure access to those jobs for people who reside within the City, as well as those who commute to jobs in Seattle from around the rest of the Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, Seattle is a built-out city where the only way to create additional capacity is through efficient use of our existing network of streets that needs to support the above-cited growth in residents and jobs without creating added noise and emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, while preserving capacity for moving goods; and

WHEREAS, Seattle’s transportation system must accommodate the City’s goals of promoting more economic

vibrancy within neighborhood business districts, manufacturing and industrial centers, and across the city and greater Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, the City has a Vision Zero goal of ending traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030; and

WHEREAS, transportation policies and decisions over the last century have had a profound impact on public health, especially within lower income and communities of color, whether through disproportionate impacts from diesel particulate and other harmful air emissions, to higher levels of noise pollution, as well as higher proportions of traffic deaths and serious injuries; and

WHEREAS, as a city, state, and nation we have concentrated transportation investments in ways that have only reinforced patterns of redlining and other government policies that limited housing options to communities of color by directing investments away from those communities into the wealthier and whiter communities that have historically had more power to advocate for their needs and desires with elected officials; and

WHEREAS, these disproportionate impacts have resulted in measurably less access to educational and work opportunities for communities of color as well; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the City convened a Transportation Equity Workgroup consisting of community members most impacted by transportation inequities that, in 2021, issued a Transportation Equity Framework to build on the City's 2004 Race and Social Justice Initiative with a guide for Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) decision-makers, employees, stakeholders, partners, and the greater community to collaboratively create an equitable transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the City aims to invest in transportation improvements equitably, consistent with Ordinance 126799, Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative, and SDOT's Transportation Equity Framework while also advancing race and gender equity in contracting as outlined in Executive Order 2023-07, Equity and Opportunity in City Contracting, and Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 20.42, Equality in Contracting; and

WHEREAS, voter-approved transportation funding has become a necessity due to state policies that prevent the City's General Fund revenues from keeping up with inflation or population growth while more traditional sources of funding for maintenance and capital improvements such as local share gas tax, federal earmarks, federal block grants programs, and more localized local-improvement districts have diminished or disappeared altogether; and

WHEREAS, the first Seattle transportation levy, Bridging the Gap, funded significant transportation system maintenance and upgrades, and met or exceeded nearly all of the commitments made as part of the voter-approved measure, including the paving of 225 lane-miles of streets, rehabilitation or seismic retrofit of 12 bridges, replacement of 90,000 street signs, enhancement of three transit corridors, construction of 120 blocks of new sidewalk, restriping of 5,000 crosswalks, implementation of 48 Safe Routes to School projects and 30 Neighborhood Street Fund projects and development of a robust asset management program that has identified and catalogued the condition of transportation assets and their maintenance needs; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 Levy to Move Seattle built on the successes of Bridging the Gap by increasing funding for system maintenance and upgrades, and is on target to meet or exceed nearly all of the commitments made as part of the voter-approved measure, including the paving of an estimated 180 lane-miles of streets, rehabilitation or seismic retrofit of 16 bridges, replacement of 30,000 street signs, enhancement of seven transit corridors, construction of 250 blocks of new sidewalk, restriping of 13,075 crosswalks, implementation of 207 Safe Routes to School projects and 35 Neighborhood Street Fund projects and significant enhancement of the asset management system first developed and deployed through the previous Bridging the Gap Levy; and

WHEREAS, the Levy to Move Seattle expires at the end of 2024 and the funding it provides needs to be replaced to continue critical maintenance and modernization of Seattle's transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the \$930 million in Levy to Move Seattle revenues leveraged another \$400 million in grants and

partnership funds and, thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other opportunities that have emerged in recent years, a new levy is expected to leverage significant outside funding for City transportation improvements; and

WHEREAS, these critical maintenance and modernization needs include safety improvements that will make bridges and streets safer, better maintain streets and sidewalks, and accommodate safer travel across all modes; and

WHEREAS, careful maintenance of transportation infrastructure today can lessen the expense of increased maintenance tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, the need to facilitate safe and reliable movement of freight and goods is essential to an economically vibrant city, and approximately 95,000 people - or 15 percent of all jobs in Seattle - are employed within the city's two manufacturing and industrial centers; and

WHEREAS, through Resolution 32131 the City Council has adopted the Seattle Transportation Plan, a multi-modal transportation vision and strategy for the next 20 years that, combined with SDOT's Asset Management Strategy and Vision Zero Program, will help the department prioritize investments to meet the goals of the new One Seattle Comprehensive Plan along with maintaining funding for the maintenance, safety, and equity needs cited above; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Transportation Plan is rooted in a vision of Seattle in 2044, conceptualizing an equitable, vibrant, and diverse city where moving around is safe, fair and sustainable, built around the goals of safety, equity, sustainability, mobility and economic vitality, livability and maintenance, and modernization; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Transportation Plan was co-created through robust and extensive involvement with community and stakeholders, including three inclusive phases of engagement that resulted in over 78,000 individual data points from: over 9,000 people; more than 130 community events attended; nearly 100 meetings and briefings; over 60,000 visits to an online engagement hub; and over 170 social

media posts; and

WHEREAS, the adopted Seattle Transportation Plan sets forth several goals to guide future investments in transportation, including prioritizing safety for all travelers, restorative practices to address transportation related inequities, responding to climate change through innovation and a lens of climate justice, providing reliable and affordable travel options that help people and goods get where they need to go, reimagine city streets with places for people to safely linger and play, and improving city infrastructure for the future; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Harrell released a draft transportation levy proposal on April 4, 2024, and since then the City has received over 1,000 additional comments; and

WHEREAS, those comments have been incorporated into this proposal through additional investments in sidewalks, transit reliability, bike network expansion, neighborhood safety improvements, preventative bridge maintenance and Transportation Funding Task Force to address longer term needs for sidewalks, bridges and other transportation infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle intends to place a levy proposal on the November 5, 2024, general election ballot to replace the expiring Levy to Move Seattle in order to continue to meet the City's transportation needs over the next eight years; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Definitions. As used in this ordinance, the following words when capitalized have the following meanings:

"City" means The City of Seattle.

"Levy Proceeds" means that portion of regular property taxes levied and collected as authorized by voter approval pursuant to this ordinance that are above the growth limit on levies in RCW 84.55.010, and all interest and other earnings thereon, and, if the City issues bonds, notes, interfund loans, or other evidences of indebtedness payable wholly or in part from the additional taxes authorized under this ordinance, as permitted

by Section 4 of this ordinance, then Levy Proceeds also includes the proceeds of those bonds, notes, interfund loans, or other evidences of indebtedness.

"Transportation Improvements" means the categories and program areas referred to in Section 6 of this ordinance, with such modifications as the City may from time to time authorize by ordinance.

Section 2. Levy of Regular Property Taxes Submittal. The City submits to the qualified electors of the City a proposition as authorized by RCW 84.55.050 to exceed the levy limitation on regular property taxes contained in RCW 84.55.010 for property taxes levied in 2024 through 2031 for collection in 2025 through 2032 respectively, solely for the purpose of raising up to \$1,450,000,000 in aggregate over a period of up to eight years for transportation purposes. The proposition shall be limited so that the City shall not levy more than \$175,000,000 in the first year, in addition to the maximum amount of regular property taxes it could have levied consistent with chapter 84.55 RCW in the absence of this ordinance. Subsequent levies' limitation computations incorporate 2025's levy dollars. In accordance with RCW 84.36.381 and RCW 84.55.050, the City exempts the proposed increased regular property taxes for certain seniors, veterans with disabilities, or other persons with disabilities who qualify under 84.36.381. Pursuant to RCW 84.55.050(4), the maximum regular property taxes that may be levied in 2032 for collection in 2033 and in later years shall be computed as if the limit on regular property taxes had not been increased under this ordinance.

Section 3. Deposit of Levy Proceeds. Unless otherwise directed by ordinance, all Levy Proceeds shall be deposited in the Transportation Levy Fund to fund Transportation Improvements. The Levy Proceeds may be temporarily deposited or invested in such manner as may be lawful for the investment of City money and all investment earnings shall be deposited in the Transportation Levy Fund. The Director of Finance is authorized to create other accounts within the Transportation Levy Fund as may be needed or appropriate to implement the purposes of this ordinance.

Section 4. Bond and Notes. To the extent permitted by applicable law, the City may issue bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness payable wholly or in part from the additional taxes authorized under this

ordinance, and may pledge and may apply such taxes to the payment of principal of, interest on, and premium (if any) on such bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness and to the payment of costs associated with them.

Section 5. Use of Levy Proceeds. The Levy Proceeds shall be used solely for Transportation Improvements in accordance with the provisions in Section 6 of this ordinance and in accordance with RCW 84.55.050. The City Council expects to appropriate or transfer General Fund revenues in the annual budget for transportation purposes. The minimum annual expected appropriation or transfer (Minimum Annual General Fund Appropriation) is \$50,740,000 in the first year of the levy; the Minimum Annual General Fund Appropriation thereafter shall be increased by an inflationary factor on an annual basis. If the Council does not appropriate or transfer the Minimum Annual General Fund Appropriation in a given year, then the Council may not levy any taxes authorized by this ordinance, for collection in the following budget year, unless the City Council by a 3/4 vote determines that economic or financial conditions prevent the Council from appropriating the Minimum Annual General Fund Appropriation for that year.

The annual inflationary factor will be the lesser of: three percent; or the percent change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers in Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue (CPI-U) for the 12-month period ending in June of the current budget year relative to the 12-month period ending in June of the prior budget year. In the event that the CPI-U for the 12-month period ending in June of the prior budget year is less than zero, the annual inflationary factor will be zero for that year.

Section 6. Transportation Improvements. Transportation Improvements will be focused among the project and program areas, as described in this section and Attachment A to this ordinance, that will be undertaken with the levy revenues.

A. Vision Zero, School and Neighborhood Safety, which includes improvements such as Aurora Avenue and other corridor safety improvements; Safe Routes to School improvements and student safety education; neighborhood-initiated safety partnerships; and a citywide project fund to address emerging neighborhood

concerns and requests;

B. Street Maintenance & Modernization, including arterial street maintenance, paving spot improvements, and curb and pavement markings;

C. Bridges and Structures, including bridge structural repairs and upgrades, preventative bridge maintenance, bridge and seawall replacement project development and design, and areaway improvements;

D. Transit Corridors and Connections, including transit spot improvements, transit ambassadors, corridor project development, Link Light Rail access projects, and RapidRide and Frequent Transit Network corridor improvements;

E. Pedestrian Safety, such as new sidewalks, sidewalk safety repairs, planning for longer term sidewalk and infrastructure solutions, stairway improvements, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) improvements and pedestrian crossing improvements;

F. Signals and Operations, including transportation system optimization and modernization; new traffic signals and major maintenance, sign maintenance, and Transportation Operations Center operations;

G. Bicycle Safety, including neighborhood greenways, bike lane maintenance, new protected bike lanes, upgraded protected bike lanes, and bikeway spot improvements;

H. People Streets and Public Spaces, including People Streets capital program, downtown activation, and People Streets and wayfinding improvements, and pedestrian lighting;

I. Climate and Resiliency, including transportation electrification, Low Pollution Neighborhoods implementation, and urban forestry improvements and maintenance; and

J. Freight and Goods Movement, including freight spot improvements, Heavy Haul Network support, and major truck street paving and bridge repair projects.

In the annual City budget or by separate ordinance, the City shall from year-to-year determine the Transportation Improvements and funding allocations that will most effectively achieve the Levy goals and outcomes. Within a budget year, the City is authorized to reallocate unexpended and unencumbered funds from

one project or program to another by making operating budget transfers consistent with Seattle Municipal Code Section 3.14.220.

The City will seek to maximize the potential of the Levy Proceeds by pursuing complementary grant funds, by engaging in partnerships with other agencies, and by identifying improvements in efficiencies and effectiveness.

Section 7. Oversight Committee. Conditioned upon voter approval of the ballot proposition submitted by this ordinance, there is established an Oversight Committee to monitor revenues, expenditures, and program and project implementation, and to advise the City Council, the Mayor and the Seattle Department of Transportation on the spending of Levy Proceeds consistent with this proposition in order to ensure transparency and accountability to Seattle taxpayers. The Committee will annually review the Seattle Department of Transportation's program and project priorities, spending, and revised financial plans. The Oversight Committee may make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding the spending of Levy Proceeds.

The Oversight Committee shall consist of 18 members: the City Budget Director; one representative each chosen by and from among the respective members of the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board, Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board, Seattle Transit Advisory Board, and Seattle Freight Board; a young member selected through the Get Engaged program, seven Seattle residents appointed by the City Council held by a representative of each Council District; and five Seattle residents appointed by the Mayor. Consistent with the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative and (Ordinance 126799) and the Department's Transportation Equity Framework, SDOT shall strive to ensure that at all times at least four members of the Levy Oversight Committee, whether in appointed or designated seats, represent census tracts identified Highest and Second Highest Equity Priority under the City of Seattle Racial and Social Equity Index.

The initial terms for appointed members shall be four years. The terms shall commence on January 1, 2025. Upon the resignation, retirement, death, incapacity, or removal of an Oversight Committee member, the

authority appointing such member may appoint a replacement for the balance of the term. Late appointments or confirmations shall also be for the balance of a term. All five members appointed by the Mayor shall be subject to confirmation by the City Council. Any vacancy in an unexpired term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. A member whose term is ending may continue on an interim basis as a member with voting rights until such time as a successor for that position has been appointed or, for the five residents appointed by the Mayor, confirmed.

The Oversight Committee will select a leadership team, which may consist of a chair, co-chairs, vice-chair, secretary, or other roles, and may adopt rules for its own procedures, including quorum requirements and frequency of meetings. Meetings of the Oversight Committee will be open to the public consistent with the Open Public Meetings Act, chapter 42.30 RCW.

Between January 1 and April 30 of 2032, the Oversight Committee may make a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council regarding the advisability of proposing to Seattle voters a replacement levy that would continue funding transportation improvements once this one expires at the end of 2032.

The factors to be considered by the Oversight Committee in making any such recommendations will include but are not limited to: (a) the City's success in project implementation, including its ability to manage and control project costs; and (b) the underlying need for funding to support the uses identified in Section 6 of this ordinance. The Mayor and City Council will consider any timely recommendations that may have been made by the Oversight Committee.

The Seattle Department of Transportation shall provide staff and logistical support for the Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee shall continue in existence through December 31, 2032, and thereafter if so provided by ordinance.

Section 8. Reporting. The Director of Transportation will prepare and submit to the City Council, the Mayor, and the Oversight Committee an annual progress report on levy spending and project and program delivery. The Oversight Committee will work with City staff in the first year of the levy to determine an

evaluation and reporting structure and cadence that best allows the Oversight Committee to perform their oversight duties. The Director of Transportation will also annually revise and deliver to the City Council, the Mayor, and the Oversight Committee a Transportation Improvements financial plan.

Section 9. Election Ballot Title. The City Council directs that the City Clerk file this ordinance with the Director of Elections of King County, Washington, as ex officio supervisor of elections, requesting that the Director of Elections call and conduct a special election in the City in conjunction with the general election to be held on November 5, 2024, for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of the City the proposition set forth in this ordinance. The City Clerk is directed to certify to the King County Director of Elections the ballot title approved by the City Attorney in accordance with the City Attorney’s responsibilities under RCW 29A.36.071. The following ballot title containing a statement of subject and concise description is submitted to the City Attorney for consideration:

CITY OF SEATTLE

PROPOSITION NO. 1

The Mayor and Seattle City Council passed Ordinance XXXX, concerning replacing funding for citywide transportation maintenance and improvements.

If approved, this proposition would replace an expiring levy to fund safety and access projects, such as: paving, sidewalk and bridge maintenance, and infrastructure modernization; transit improvements; improved connections to light rail; new sidewalks; and climate pollution reductions.

It authorizes an eight-year increase of approximately \$0.59/\$1,000 in assessed value, for collection beginning in 2025. It cannot increase the City’s total rate above \$3.60/\$1,000. Subsequent levies’ limitation computations incorporate 2025’s levy dollars. RCW 84.36.381’s senior citizens and disabled persons exemption applies.

Should this levy be approved?

Levy, Yes

Levy, No

Section 10. Section Titles. Section titles are for convenient reference only and do not modify or limit the text of a section.

Section 11. Severability. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, or portion of this ordinance, or the invalidity of its application to any person or circumstance, does not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances, including the validity of authorizing additional taxes by levy.

Section 12. Any act consistent with the authority of this ordinance taken after its passage and prior to its effective date is ratified and confirmed.

Section 13. Those portions of this ordinance providing for the submission of a ballot proposition to the voters shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070. Those portions of this ordinance that are dependent upon voter approval of said ballot proposition shall take effect in accordance with applicable law.

Passed by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2024, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2024.

President _____ of the City Council

Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this ____ day of _____, 2024.

Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2024.

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)

Attachments:
Attachment A - Transportation Levy Spending Breakdown

Attachment A: Transportation Levy Spending Breakdown

Seattle Transportation Levy (Draft May 1, 2024)

The Seattle Department of Transportation anticipates funding for the following project and program areas over the 8-year property tax levy. Annual budget appropriations will be made through the city budget. Expected additional leverage amounts are estimated grant and partnerships funds estimated to be secured and spent in order to complete or supplement project and program areas as identified below.

These investments are in support of the goals set forth in the Seattle Transportation Plan, a 20-year vision for the future of our transportation system:

- Prioritize safety for travelers in Seattle, with no serious injury or fatal crashes
- Co-create with community and implement restorative practices to address transportation-related inequities
- Respond to climate change through innovation and a lens of climate justice
- Provide reliable and affordable travel options that help people and goods get where they need to go
- Reimagine city streets as inviting places to linger and play
- Improve city transportation infrastructure and ready it for the future

Vision Zero, School and Neighborhood Safety: Make targeted and community-requested improvements to streets, sidewalks, intersections, and crossings to reduce traffic collisions, severe injuries, and fatalities.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Vision Zero	Implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety redesign projects on up to 12 corridors on the High Injury Network • Responsive safety projects at up to 40 high-collision locations • Leading pedestrian intervals at 280 intersections • Traffic calming on 50 corridors Anticipated Initial Vision Zero projects on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora Ave N • N/NE 85th St • S Othello St • N 105th St/Holman Rd NW • Dexter Ave N • Lake City Way NE • 4th Ave S • MLK Jr Way S • Lakeside Ave S at Lake Washington Blvd • N/NE 50th St • Other projects as identified in Vision Zero work plans 	\$70M
Safe Routes to School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to up to 70 projects to improve safety and fund safety education programs at public schools 	\$7M

Aurora Avenue N Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement safety improvements and phased reconstruction on Aurora Ave N aided by leverage funds 	\$30M
Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build up to 16 neighborhood-initiated and co-created projects, focusing on community priorities with an emphasis on equity. This could include safety and mobility enhancements like new sidewalks, crossings, and transit access. 	\$41M
District Project Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide funds to address emergent safety concerns and requests 	\$14M
Levy Funding		\$162M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$74M-\$90M

Street Maintenance and Modernization: Repave arterial streets that carry the most buses, trucks, and cars, and improve infrastructure for people walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Arterial Roadway Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repave approximately 15 major corridors. This will include a combination of roadway reconstruction and preservation projects. Initial projects are anticipated to include portions of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N 130th St: 1st Ave NW to I-5 Roosevelt Way NE: NE 92nd St to Pinehurst Way NE E Marginal Way S: 1st Ave S to 16th Ave S Rainier Ave S: S Walden St to S Jackson St Additional corridors that will be evaluated for specific paving extents through a design process include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15th Ave NE: Pinehurst Way NE to NE 145th St Pinehurst Way NE: Roosevelt Way NE to 15th Ave NE NE 65th St: 2nd Ave NE to 35th Ave NE NW Market St: 15th Ave NW to 24th Ave NW 23rd Ave E/24th Ave E: E John St to Lake Washington Blvd Elliott Ave/Western Ave: Bell St to Thomas St James St: 3rd Ave to Broadway Beacon Ave S to support Route 36 improvements 35 Ave SW: SW Morgan St to SW Holden St S Albro Pl, Corson Ave S, and Ellis Ave S: E Marginal Way S to I-5 Olson Pl SW/1st Ave S: 2nd Ave SW to SW Cloverdale St S Henderson St: MLK Jr Way S to Seward Park Ave S 	\$350M
Paving Spot Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair approximately 400 locations, totaling about 50 lane-miles of pavement on arterial streets Fill 80% of reported potholes within 72 hours 	\$67M

Markings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remark up to 3,600 crosswalks and refresh pavement markings on at least 2,100 miles of roadway 	\$6M
Levy Funding		\$423M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$19M-\$24M

Bridges and Structures: Keep bridges and structures in reliable working condition and prepare for future bridge projects.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Bridge Structural Repairs and Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade electrical and mechanical systems on moveable Ship Canal Bridges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballard Bridge Fremont Bridge University Bridge Make structural repairs on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballard Bridge Magnolia Bridge 	\$71M
Bridge Preventative Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement preventative maintenance for the City's 134 bridges, making optimum preservation-focused treatment schedules for deck and joint replacement, bridge cleaning and painting, and spot repairs 	\$127M
Project Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance 6 structures in preparation to seek funding partnerships for future replacement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elliott Bay Seawall Phase II (north segment) 1st Ave S Bridge over Argo Railyard 4th Ave S Bridge over Argo Railyard W Dravus Street over Railyard NE 45th St Viaduct Central Span Magnolia Bridge Replacement Alternatives Cost Estimate updates 	\$20M
Areaways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data collection, strengthen public-private partnerships, pursue grants, and advance repairs 	\$3M
Levy Funding		\$221M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$45M-55M

Transit Corridors and Connections: Connect people safely to transit hubs, including Link light rail stations and bus stops; and reduce delays on bus routes.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Transit Spot Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 160 projects citywide to improve bus reliability, access, equity, and safety with a focus on performance pinch points affecting multiple routes, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW Oregon St between 44th Ave SW and California Ave SW along routes 50 and 128 MLK Jr Way S between S Myrtle St and S Othello St 	\$27M

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ along Route 106 ○ E Jefferson St between 9th Ave and 12th Ave along routes 3 and 4 ○ W Nickerson St between 3rd Ave W and 4th Ave N along routes 31 and 32 	
Transit Passenger Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invest in strategies that increase transit rider safety and security 	\$3M
Transit Improvements and Access to Light Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make transit improvements on streets with high-ridership bus routes with a focus in equity priority areas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rainier Ave S ○ Beacon Ave S ○ Aurora Ave N (funded via Vision Zero, School and Neighborhood Safety) ○ Denny Way/Olive Way ● Build access projects to Link light rail stations such as enhanced bus stops, sidewalks, crossings, bike lanes, and/or lighting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ N 130th St ○ S Henderson St ○ Judkins Park Station Connections ● Advance key connections to future Link light rail stations in coordination with partner agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NE 145th St ○ SW Alaska St ○ 4th Ave S ○ S Graham St ○ East-West South Lake Union Transit Connections 	\$115M
Levy Funding		\$145M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$143M - \$175M

Pedestrian Safety: Build and repair sidewalks, crossings, and curb ramps so people walking and rolling can safely get to where they need to go.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
New Sidewalks	<p>Support construction of 280 blocks of new sidewalks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 250 blocks of new sidewalks and alternative walkways, complete or in construction by 2029 ● 30 blocks of new sidewalks located on the frequent transit network <p>Anticipated initial projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1st Ave NE: NE 120th St – NE 130th St ● SW Brandon St: 26th Ave SW to 30th Ave SW ● NE Ravenna Blvd: 12th Ave NE to Brooklyn Ave NE 	\$63M

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renton Ave S: 35th Ave S to S Dawson St • Greenwood Ave N: N 112th St to N 117th St • Gilman Ave W: W Manor Pl to 28th Ave W • NE 95th St: Sand Point Way NE to 35th Ave NE 	
Sidewalk Safety Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make up to approximately 34,000 spot repairs to sidewalks 	\$19M
Sidewalk and Infrastructure Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and implement sidewalk and infrastructure repair and funding strategies 	\$5M
ADA Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to building 10,000 new ADA-accessible curb ramps citywide (combines with other funds and projects to reach 1,250 annual ramps required by Consent Decree) 	\$30M
Stairways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete up to 9 stairway repairs or expansions 	\$4M
Crossing Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make improvements at street crossings, including upgraded crosswalks, visibility improvements, pedestrian crossing signals, and more. Initial projects are expected to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5th Ave NE and NE Banner Way ○ Rainier Ave S and S Henderson St ○ 35th Ave NE ○ 11th Ave E and E Aloha St 	\$14M
Levy Funding		\$135M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$18M - \$22M

Signals and Operations: Install, maintain, and upgrade traffic signals for safe, reliable movement; improve pedestrian and bike accessibility signals; and support traffic operations during large events, incidents, and for trips in and out of the port.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Traffic Signal Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 40 corridor signal timing adjustment projects • Implement up to 4 Intelligent Transportation System projects 	\$32M
Traffic Signals and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and install traffic signals at up to 10 locations • Complete major maintenance on 40 traffic signals • Add accessible pedestrian signals for at least 50 crossings • Conduct preventative maintenance at traffic signals 	\$45M
Sign Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace at least 5,500 signs 	\$5M
Transportation Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and respond to approximately 24,000 constituent operational complaints and questions • Maintain 24/7 service in the Transportation Operations Center 	\$18M
Levy Funding		\$100M

Expected Additional Leverage	\$0
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Bicycle Safety: Expand Seattle’s protected bike lane network; connect schools to bike lanes, paths, and neighborhood greenways; and maintain and upgrade existing bike lanes		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Neighborhood Greenways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create bicycle connections for all ages and abilities with at least 5 new neighborhood greenways on residential streets with a focus on K-8 public schools and south Seattle connections 	\$20M
Bike Lane Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing protected bike lanes with regular sweeping and barrier repair 	\$8M
Protected Bike Lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add concrete-protected bike lanes as part of paving projects, closing gaps in all ages and abilities bicycle network. Initial projects include segments along the following corridors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ N 130 St ○ S Henderson St ○ Beacon Ave S (Middle and Southern segments) ○ Highland Park Way SW ○ Cleveland High School Swift Ave S protected bike lane and Georgetown S Albro Pl Connection ○ Chief Sealth Trail: S Myrtle St to S Webster St 	\$68M
Upgraded Bike Lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade 30% of existing protected bike lanes with improved barriers or buffer areas 	\$8M
Bike Spot Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make safety improvements to existing bike lanes, trails and neighborhood greenways 	\$10M
Levy Funding		\$114M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$24M - \$30M

People Streets and Public Spaces: Activate public spaces and improve lighting in partnership with business districts and community organizations so people can enjoy unique and vibrant neighborhoods and business districts.		
Program	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
People Streets Capital Projects	<p>Design, implement, and co-create People Street Projects to activate business districts and community spaces, with a focus on high equity priority areas. Improvements could include redesigned streets, seating, wayfinding, lighting, and activation. Anticipated initial projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Henderson St • Occidental Promenade • Chinatown/International District Alley Activation • E Union St Revival Corridor • NE 42nd St Green Street Improvements • Additional projects identified with business districts 	\$39M

	and community organizations	
Downtown Activation	Invest in near-term maintenance and placemaking improvements, construction coordination, and advancement of a longer-term vision for 3rd Ave	\$15M
People Streets and Wayfinding Maintenance	Provide maintenance for existing activation projects and citywide wayfinding system	\$2M
Pedestrian Lighting	Install pedestrian lighting leading to transit stops	\$10M
Levy Funding		\$66M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$14M - \$17M

Climate and Resiliency: Address climate change directly, reducing air pollution and making sustainable transportation options more available.		
Category	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Climate and Electrification Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Seattle City Light’s expansion of electric vehicle charging stations to libraries, community centers and parks Support partnerships and pursue grants that help electrify the transportation system 	\$22M
Low Pollution Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with at least 3 neighborhoods on low pollution pilot projects, which could include low-emissions goods delivery in areas most impacted by climate change 	\$8M
Urban Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant and maintain trees, meeting the Mayor’s Executive Order for 3 to 1 tree replacement Expand tree species diversity in areas that historically have had less investment in tree planting and care 	\$29M
Levy Funding		\$59M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$15M - \$19M

Freight and Goods Movement: Make freight improvements to support trucks delivering goods and providing services		
Program	Estimated Investments	Levy Funding
Freight Spot Improvements	Make at least 32 investments to support the freight network, including adjustments to improve truck movement, intersection upgrades, and additional truck parking	\$17M
Heavy Haul Network	In partnership with the Port of Seattle and alignment with the Heavy Haul Network agreement, identify and pave streets that carry the heaviest truck traffic	\$8M
Levy Funding		\$25M
Expected Additional Leverage		\$12M - \$15M
Grand Total Levy Funding (All Categories)		\$1,450M

Note: Totals may not sum properly due to rounding.

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
SDOT	Bill LaBorde	Aaron Blumenthal

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to transportation; providing for the submission to the qualified electors of the City at an election to be held on November 5, 2024, a proposition authorizing the City to levy regular property taxes for up to eight years in excess of the limitation on levies in chapter 84.55 RCW for the purpose of providing City facilities and services, including transportation improvements, both capital and operating, with possible debt financing; creating a new oversight committee; applying RCW 84.36.381’s senior citizens and disabled persons exemption; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.

Summary and Background of the Legislation: This ordinance would submit an 8-year levy lid lift proposal to the voters of Seattle for their approval on November 5, 2024, general election ballot. The proposal would renew and expand the previous Levy to Move Seattle. Under the authority of RCW 84.55, the levy renewal proposal would authorize property tax collection up to \$175,000,000 in the first year and an estimated total of \$1,450,000,000 of revenue over 8 years that would be dedicated exclusively to transportation purposes. If the new levy is approved, Council must appropriate at least \$50,740,000 of General Fund revenues to the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) for transportation purposes in the first year and adjusted for inflation or 3%, whichever is lower, each year thereafter. If the annual minimum General Fund amount is not appropriated, then the City cannot collect levy proceeds the following year unless a three-fourths super-majority of the City Council determines that economic or financial conditions prevent the Council from making such an appropriation. If the transportation levy is approved by the voters, the 2025 total regular tax limit would increase by approximately \$0.59/\$1,000 in assessed value. Qualifying low-income seniors, veterans and people with disabilities who own their principal residence within the City of Seattle would be exempt from the levied amount as authorized under RCW 84.36.381. In King County, the exemption currently extends to homeowners above age 61 or with a disability rating of at least 80%, with a household income under \$84,000. Revenue projections in this ordinance and fiscal note are inclusive of anticipated exemptions offered under RCW 84.36.381.

This proposal would build on the previous levy’s efforts to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system, while also doing more to invest in the future transportation needs of our city. Programmatic transportation improvement would be focused in the project and program categories as described in ordinance Section 6 and further elaborated on in Attachment A to the ordinance.

The Levy to Move Seattle, approved by voters in 2015, provided \$930 million of SDOT’s local revenue and has allowed the City to leverage an additional \$400 million in Federal and State grants along with other partnership funds. The Levy to Move Seattle funded significant

transportation system maintenance and upgrades, including items such as paving 250 lane-miles of streets, rehabilitation or seismic retrofit of 16 bridges, replacement of 30,888 street signs, enhancement of seven transit corridors, and construction of 250 blocks of new sidewalk.

In addition, the costs of delivering services have grown at a much faster rate than revenue growth. Since 2015, the Consumer Price Index has increased by 45% and the Mortenson construction index for the Seattle Market, which is based on the actual costs of the major elements of construction contracts around the state (e.g., labor, asphalt, concrete, and structural steel), has risen by approximately 66%.

At the same time, the City continues to see tremendous growth in population while SDOT's existing infrastructure continues to age and is increasingly strained to meet the changing transportation patterns of Seattle residents, employers and conveyors of goods, including the exports and imports moved through the City by the Port of Seattle and its partners. The transportation system must continue to work safely and effectively for today's users, while evolving to move more people and more goods through the same amount of right-of-way.

As the current Levy to Move Seattle expires at the end of 2024, the City is preparing for the next phase of investment in transportation infrastructure with an ongoing emphasis on basic programs that invest in the maintenance and modernization of transportation infrastructure while continuing to serve the ongoing growth of the city consistent with the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? Yes No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City? Yes No

This legislation provides for a transportation levy proposal to be placed on the ballot, which, if approved, would provide an estimated \$1.45 billion of dedicated revenue for transportation purposes over eight years; approximately \$175 million of this revenue would be generated in 2025. These revenues are not added to the City's budget through this legislation but will be accounted for in separate legislation if the levy is approved.

3.d. Other Impacts

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle, including direct or indirect, one-time, or ongoing costs, that are not included in Sections 3.a through 3.c? If so, please describe these financial impacts.

As noted above, this legislation does not directly impact appropriations or position numbers. Appropriations, position changes and acceptance of additional revenue will be approved in separate legislation upon voter approval of the levy.

If the legislation has costs, but they can be absorbed within existing operations, please describe how those costs can be absorbed. The description should clearly describe if the absorbed costs are achievable because the department had excess resources within their existing budget or if by absorbing these costs the department is deprioritizing other work that would have used these resources.

This legislation does not directly impact appropriations or positions. Appropriations, position changes, and acceptance of additional revenue will be approved in separate legislation upon voter approval.

Please describe any financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation.

This legislation would authorize a new ballot measure and levy proposal to replace the expiring Levy to Move Seattle, representing a significant loss of revenues that support transportation core functions like maintenance while also supporting the expansion and modernization of our current infrastructure.

Without a new levy, SDOT's budget would not be sufficient to maintain current service levels. Given the current broader financial constraints for the City as a whole, we do not anticipate alternative funding becoming available to support the ongoing operations of the Department in the 2025-2026 biennium. In the event that this legislation is not approved, and that a measure is not placed on the ballot or approved by voters, SDOT anticipates significant reductions to its budget starting in the 2025 fiscal year. These reductions could include: street paving, bridge and structure repair, sidewalk repair, traffic signal maintenance, new sidewalk construction, neighborhood projects and transit improvements. These funding reductions would mean an increased degradation of transportation infrastructure and greater risk of disrepair and failure.

Furthermore, as the current Levy to Move Seattle supports a significant portion of work at SDOT, without this revenue stream, the Department will have to reduce its workforce capacity to a level that it can support with existing funding.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Please describe how this legislation may affect any departments besides the originating department.

This legislation does not directly impact other departments through changes in appropriations or personnel.

If the levy proposed in this legislation is approved, it would increase funding allowing SDOT to implement additional projects to maintain or improve the transportation system. These projects will result in opportunities to integrate infrastructure maintenance and upgrades within the City's right-of-way that could result in the need to relocate, rehabilitate, or replace utility infrastructure managed by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), Seattle City Light (SCL), and Seattle IT. The levy renewal proposal provides increased funding for traffic safety and operational improvements, which could result in efficiencies for the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and the Seattle Fire Department (SFD). SDOT has been actively coordinating with all the above-listed departments, as well as outside agencies, including King County Metro, Sound Transit, and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

If the levy proposed in this legislation is not approved, there could be significant impacts on other City departments such as weight restrictions or closures of bridges (impacting police and fire response) or lower levels of transportation operations staffing, reducing ability to respond to traffic incidents and safety needs (also impacting SPD and SFD).

Lack of funding for transportation improvements would reduce the City's ability to respond to expected growth (impacting the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections and the Office of Economic Development) or to partner with SPU on upgrades to drainage, water and sewer upgrades within the right-of-way, as well as environmental goals (Office of Sustainability and the Environment).

- b. Does this legislation affect a piece of property? If yes, please attach a map and explain any impacts on the property. Please attach any Environmental Impact Statements, Determinations of Non-Significance, or other reports generated for this property.**

No.

- c. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative.**

- i. How does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you arrive at this conclusion? In your response please consider impacts within City government (employees, internal programs) as well as in the broader community.**

SDOT has developed a Racial Equity Toolkit on the specific investments in the levy proposal that can be located geographically at this time. Generally, investment in transportation options that make the expense of car ownership an option, rather than a necessity, is a benefit to vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities.

Transportation is second only to housing as a share of the average King County household's monthly expenditures, and much of that expense is car ownership. Additionally, more efficient mobility options, including transit improvements such as partnering with King County Metro on the RapidRide R project on Rainier, or the adding new sidewalks or making other safety improvements in Race and Social Equity Index high priority areas of the city such as Rainier Beach, Haller Lake, South Park and Highland Park can lead to more equitable outcomes and improved access to opportunity and even help minority business districts thrive, similar to how past safety and infrastructure improvements on 23rd Ave S have facilitated the work of the Africatown Community Land Trust.

- ii. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.**

SDOT is currently updating the Racial Equity Toolkit analysis to reflect revised tax rates and program commitments as reflected in the final version of the Mayor's Levy Final Renewal Proposal incorporated in this ordinance. SDOT will submit the revised RET analysis directly to Council by May 21, 2024.

iii. What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?

SDOT has provided Levy materials through an online engagement hub in Spanish, Chinese (Traditional), Korean, Amharic, Somali, Tagalog, and Vietnamese in addition to English. Cultural Liaisons and interpreters were also available based at public tabling locations based on Tier 1 languages for the surrounding community.

The most critical input for the draft and final proposed levy proposals is the recently adopted Seattle Transportation Plan (STP), which is the product of two years of extensive outreach. SDOT contracted with community-based organizations and worked with numerous community liaisons to ensure extensive input from communities who have historically been underrepresented in previous long-range planning efforts and in underinvestment of transportation improvements. Through both the STP and Levy engagement, SDOT worked with as many as 15 multicultural media outlets to bring people to tabling events and online engagement opportunities. Online and community engagement in support of the STP was accessible via 16 languages, including all Tier 1, 2, and 3 languages.

d. Climate Change Implications

i. Emissions: How is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way? Please attach any studies or other materials that were used to inform this response.

The Mayor's Levy Renewal proposal supports reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in several ways. First and foremost, the proposal continues to support the ongoing climate strategies of current and past comprehensive plans expected to continue under the final One Seattle Comprehensive Plan by supporting increased residential development within short distances to job growth and commercial and industrial development within urban centers and other nodes of development and transit access. The proposal also supports improved and safer access to transit, as well as short trips to neighborhood business districts and other destinations via pedestrian pathways and bikeways. More specific to Climate, the Mayor's proposal includes \$22 million in investments supporting transportation electrification and \$8 million to pilot Low Pollution Neighborhoods, consistent with the Mayor's Executive Order 2022-07: One Seattle Climate Justice Actions to Reduce Emissions from the Transportation Sector.

ii. Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle's resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.

A substantial portion of the Mayor's Levy Renewal proposal is focused on preventative maintenance funding that will help ensure SDOT can continue to adapt to increasing numbers of extreme temperature and precipitation events due to climate change that impact our streets and bridges. The proposed plan also allocates \$29 million for tree planting and expanded tree species diversity in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods, as well as ongoing maintenance of our existing street tree canopy.

- e. **If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program’s desired goal(s)? What mechanisms will be used to measure progress towards meeting those goals?**

This ordinance requires annual reporting on delivery of levy commitments along with annual work plans. Additionally, the ordinance establishes a new Levy Oversight Committee made up of Seattle residents charged with assessing and reporting on SDOT’s progress on delivering on levy commitments.

5. CHECKLIST

- Is a public hearing required?**
- Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required?**
- If this legislation changes spending and/or revenues for a fund, have you reviewed the relevant fund policies and determined that this legislation complies?**
- Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP project that involves a shared financial commitment with a non-City partner agency or organization?**

6. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments: None.

May 14, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy
From: Calvin Chow, Analyst
Subject: 2024 Transportation Levy – Issue Identification

On May 3, 2024, the Mayor announced an eight-year, \$1.45 billion property tax [proposal](#) to renew the 2015 Move Seattle Transportation Levy. [Council Bill \(CB\) 120788](#), referred to the Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy (Select Committee), would put the measure before voters on the November 2024 general election. The Executive presented the Mayor’s proposal at the first meeting of the Select Committee on May 7, 2024.

This memorandum (1) summarizes the Mayor’s levy proposal and compares it to the expiring 2015 Move Seattle Transportation Levy, (2) describes the changes in the Mayor’s proposal from his April draft [announcement](#),¹ and (3) identifies potential issues for Council’s consideration.

Mayor’s 2024 Transportation Levy Proposal

The Mayor’s proposal is to renew the transportation levy at \$1.45 billion over an eight-year term. This is a higher amount and shorter term than the existing Move Seattle Levy (\$930 million over a nine-year term). For comparison, an inflation-only adjusted renewal of Move Seattle would be approximately \$1.2 billion over eight years.

The proposal identifies 10 spending categories. Note that some projects and programs support multiple objectives but are categorized under their primary function. The projects and programs are further described in [Attachment A](#) to the legislation and include:

- ***Vision Zero, School and Neighborhood Safety (\$162 million):*** Vision Zero, Safe Routes to School, Aurora Avenue N Safety, Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program, and District Project Fund.
- ***Street Maintenance and Modernization (\$423 million):*** Arterial Roadway Maintenance, Paving Spot Improvements, and Markings.
- ***Bridges and Structures (\$221 million):*** Bridge Structural Repairs and Upgrades, Bridge Preventative Maintenance, Project Readiness, and Areaways.
- ***Transit Corridors and Connections (\$145 million):*** Transit Spot Improvements, Transit Passenger Safety, and Transit Improvements and Access to Light Rail.
- ***Pedestrian Safety (\$135 million):*** New Sidewalks, Sidewalk Safety Repair, Sidewalk and Infrastructure Solutions, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Program, Stairways, and Crossing Improvements.

¹ Please see Attachment 1 (Central Staff memo on the Mayor’s Draft Transportation Levy Proposal, April 16, 2024) for more context on transportation funding, other property tax measures, and details of the Mayor’s April draft proposal.

- Signals and Operations (\$100 million): Traffic Signal Timing, Traffic Signals and Maintenance, Sign Maintenance, and Transportation Operations.
- Bicycle Safety (\$114 million): Neighborhood Greenways, Bike Lane Maintenance, Projected Bike Lanes, Upgraded Bike Lanes, and Bike Spot Improvements.
- People Streets and Public Spaces (\$66 million): People Streets Capital Projects, Downtown Activation, People Streets and Wayfinding Maintenance, and Pedestrian Lighting.
- Climate and Resiliency (\$59 million): Climate and Electrification Program, Low Pollution Neighborhoods, and Urban Forestry.
- Freight and Goods Movement (\$25 million): Freight Spot Improvements and Heavy Haul Network.

While these categories differ from the previous Move Seattle categories,² the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has provided a recategorization of Move Seattle Levy spending for comparison. The comparison between Move Seattle and the Mayor’s proposed spending is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Move Seattle and Mayor’s Proposed Levy Spending

Category	Move Seattle (2015)		Mayor’s Proposal (2024)	
	9-year Revenue	% share	8-Year Revenue	% share
a. Vision Zero, School & Neighborhood Safety ³	\$55 million	5.9%	\$162 million	11.2%
b. Street Maintenance and Modernization	\$253 million	27.2%	\$423 million	29.2%
c. Bridges and Structures	\$149 million	16.0%	\$221 million	15.2%
d. Transit Corridors and Connections	\$165 million	17.7%	\$145 million	10.0%
e. Pedestrian Safety	\$103 million	11.1%	\$135 million	9.3%
f. Signals and Operations	\$66 million	7.1%	\$100 million	6.9%
g. Bicycle Safety	\$72 million	7.7%	\$114 million	7.9%
h. People Streets and Public Safety	--	0.0%	\$66 million	4.6%
i. Climate and Resiliency	\$30 million	3.2%	\$59 million	4.1%
j. Freight and Goods Movement	\$38 million	4.1%	\$25 million	1.7%
Total	\$931 million		\$1,450 million	

² The Move Seattle Levy grouped levy programs under three categories: Safe Routes, Congestion Relief, and Maintenance and Repair. The Move Seattle Levy was put before the voters by [Ordinance 124796](#), which also included an [Attachment A – Spending Breakdown](#) as the commitment to voters and basis for reporting.

³ The Mayor’s April draft proposal included \$48 million to Build Projects With Community. This funding has been repurposed for a Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program and a District Project Fund under the Vision Zero, School & Neighborhood Safety category in the Mayor’s May proposal.

In summary, the proposed legislation (CB 120788):

- Authorizes the submittal of a property tax levy to voters and establishes the conditions for levy collection, including the requirement of a minimum General Fund contribution to transportation as part of the City's budget (Section 1 through Section 5).
- Establishes the allowable uses of levy funds, including reference to Attachment A which details anticipated levy spending levels for various projects and programs (Section 6).
- Creates an Oversight Committee to monitor and advise on implementation (Section 7).
- Specifies reporting requirements on levy spending and accomplishments (Section 8).
- Establishes the draft ballot title for certification by the City Attorney (Section 9).
- Includes a section title clause, severability clause, ratify and confirm clause, and effective date clause (Section 10 through Section 13).

This legislation establishes the terms of the levy and cannot be changed (without going back to voters). Within the constraints established by this legislation, future project and program implementation would be addressed through the budget process or other legislative actions.

Changes From Mayor's April Draft Proposal

Overall, the Mayor's May (final) proposal increases the size of the levy by \$100 million. Compared to the April draft announcement, the Mayor's proposal:

- Reallocates \$48 million of proposed spending for community-driven projects for a \$41 million Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program and creates a \$14 million District Project Fund to respond to neighborhood issues and concerns. This program realignment represents a net \$7 million increase in funding from the April draft proposal.
- Adds \$3 million for Bridge Preventative Maintenance (for a total of \$127 million).
- Adds \$20 million for Transit Spot Improvements (for a total of \$27 million).
- Adds \$3 million for Transit Passenger Safety (new program).
- Adds \$20 million for New Sidewalks (for a total of \$63 million). The increased spending is focused on an additional 30 blocks of sidewalks on transit routes in urban centers.
- Adds \$5 million for Sidewalk and Infrastructure Strategies (new program). The increased funding would advance sidewalk and infrastructure repair strategies and support the work of a new Transportation Funding Task Force (described below).
- Adds \$1 million for Sidewalk Safety Repair (for a total of \$19 million).
- Adds \$20 million for Protected Bike Lanes (for a total of \$68 million). The increased spending is focused on South Seattle bike network projects.

- Adds \$6 million for People Streets Capital Projects (for a total of \$39 million). The increased spending is proposed for the Occidental Promenade project.
- Adds \$5 million for Pedestrian Lighting (for a total of \$10 million).
- Adds \$10 million for the Climate and Electrification Program (for a total of \$22 million). The increased spending supports deployment of charging stations at public facilities.

The Mayor’s proposal also calls for the formation of a Transportation Funding Task Force, charged with identifying funding strategies and policy recommendations for sidewalks, bridges, and other transportation assets by the end of 2026. Separate legislation is anticipated to guide the Task Force’s formation and scope but is not currently before Council. Such legislation could be drafted for consideration by the Select Committee or could be deferred for future Council action.

Potential Issues for Council’s Consideration

As previously mentioned, the legislation before Council would establish the terms and conditions of the levy which cannot be changed without going back to the voters. Implementation of levy programs will be subject to the Council’s annual budget process within the constraints approved by voters. In developing potential amendments to the legislation, Council should consider whether the issue is best addressed through binding commitments in the levy legislation, through separate companion legislation, or deferred for future budget deliberations.

In reviewing the legislation, Central Staff has identified seven issues for Council’s consideration.

Issue 1 – General Terms of the Proposed Levy

The proposed levy is an eight-year, \$1.45 billion property tax package. The legislation includes a commitment to not supplant existing transportation funding by establishing a minimum General Fund budget requirement for transportation purposes. For the first year of the levy, the minimum General Fund requirement would be \$50.74 million, and this amount would escalate with an inflationary factor tied to the Seattle Consumer Price Index. The legislation provides an exemption clause from this requirement if the Council determines by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote that economic or financial conditions prevent the City from meeting the General Fund obligation.

Both the minimum General Fund requirement and the exemption clause are consistent with provisions in the existing Move Seattle Levy. Over the course of the Move Seattle Levy, Council suspended the minimum General Fund requirement once for the 2020 Budget in response to the Covid pandemic and reduced revenues ([Ordinance 126128](#)).

In 2024, the Seattle median assessed value (AV) home (valued at \$804,000) will pay \$2,430 in property taxes to Seattle, including \$300 for the expiring Move Seattle Levy. At \$1.45 billion, the Mayor’s proposed levy renewal would cost the median AV home \$469 per year. This would

be an increase of \$169 per year from the Move Seattle Levy, representing a 56 percent increase for the first year of the levy.⁴ The legislation also authorizes a property tax exemption for income-qualified seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities, pursuant to Washington State law. These state-authorized tax exemption programs are administered by King County.

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Increasing or decreasing the \$1.45 billion size of the levy.
- B. Changing the eight-year term of the levy.
- C. Modifying the General Fund requirement or other general provisions of the levy.

Issue 2 – Legal Spending Requirements

The legislation identifies proposed spending levels for each levy program by category in Attachment A; however, the legislation does not establish these spending levels as legal requirements. Rather, the legislation anticipates that spending will be governed by Council’s future budget deliberations and tracked as part of levy oversight and reporting.

Previously, the Move Seattle Levy included legal requirements on the total nine-year appropriations for three categories of levy spending: \$207 million for Safe Routes, \$303 million for Congestion Relief, and \$420 million for Maintenance and Repair. The Move Seattle Levy provided for these total appropriations to be changed by up to 10 percent by future ordinance, or by more than 10 percent by future ordinance with a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote. In response to the Covid pandemic and reduced revenues, Council approved a spending shift in the Move Seattle Levy in 2020 ([Ordinance 126230](#)). In addition to the categorical spending requirements, the Move Seattle Levy also included a separate call out for the Lander Street grade separation project (not less than \$20 million of levy appropriations).

Removing these legal appropriation requirements for the proposed legislation provides greater flexibility in the budget process and may help the City adapt to changing financial conditions or emerging priorities over the course of the levy. This approach relies on the Oversight Committee (see Issue 4 below) and reporting structures (see Issue 5 below) to track spending commitments.

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Establishing legal spending requirements for categories of levy spending.
- B. Establishing legal spending requirements for specific programs of interest to the Council.
- C. No change to legislation; defer to future budget actions and track commitments through levy oversight and reporting.

⁴ Property tax impacts assessed by Central Staff’s Fiscal Policy team. For more information on property taxes in general, please see Central Staff’s March 2023 [memo](#).

Issue 3 – Proposed Spending Allocations and Commitments to Voters

While the proposed legislation does not include legal spending requirements, Attachment A documents the anticipated spending levels and investments. As such, Attachment A represents the levy’s commitment to voters and will be used as the basis for oversight and reporting. No levy funding may be used for programs that are not identified in the legislation and/or Attachment A. The Council may wish to consider adjusting the planned spending levels for levy programs. Increasing funding for levy programs would require offsetting reductions elsewhere or an increase in the total size of the levy proposal.

Some of the programs and projects listed in Attachment A identify specific initial investments (individual projects or project locations). For example, the Arterial Roadway Maintenance (i.e., paving) program anticipates delivering 15 corridors, while identifying four initial projects and 12 additional locations to be evaluated to determine paving extents. Similarly, the New Sidewalks program anticipates delivering 280 blocks of sidewalks, while identifying seven initial locations for levy improvements. The Council may wish to consider if the identified initial projects in Attachment A are the appropriate commitments to put before voters.

A specific program of note for the Council is the District Project Fund. The intent of this fund is to address emerging neighborhood concerns and be responsive to District requests. The details of how this fund would be managed and implemented have not yet been established, however program spending would be subject to future budget deliberations. As proposed at \$14 million, this level of spending would support approximately \$250,000 of investment per year in each of the seven Council Districts over the eight-year term of the levy.

Another program of note is the new \$41 million Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program. This program is intended to replace the Neighborhood Street Fund program funded in the Move Seattle Levy. The program would support neighborhood-initiated and co-created projects, but it would not utilize the Neighborhood Street Fund application and voting process. Implementation details for this program are not included in the legislation but could be addressed through the budget or separate legislative action. Implementation of levy programs is also discussed in Issue 7 below.

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Amending Attachment A to authorize use of levy funds on other programs or projects not currently identified in the legislation.
- B. Amending Attachment A to adjust allocated spending levels for levy programs and projects.
- C. Amending Attachment A to modify the specific project commitments (i.e., the named initial locations) to be delivered by levy programs.

Issue 4 – Levy Oversight Committee Membership and Resources

The legislation establishes an 18-member Oversight Committee to monitor implementation, advise the Council and Mayor on levy spending, provide transparency and accountability to Seattle taxpayers, and opine on the advisability of proposing a replacement levy in 2032. The Oversight Committee is modelled on the current Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee.

The Move Seattle Oversight Committee presented their [recommendations](#) at the May 7 Select Committee meeting. These recommendations included:

1. Strong support for a 2024 levy renewal proposal with increased funding over Move Seattle.
2. Exploration of additional revenue sources to address deteriorating roadways and bridges.
3. Exploration of additional funding tools to support transportation projects and programs.
4. Focus on staff capacity and readiness to deliver and execute the next levy.
5. Focus on Racial and Social Equity as a high priority for implementation.
6. Not overpromising and ensuring flexibility throughout the term of the next levy.
7. Improving oversight capacity, including levy funding to support audits of levy-funded programs.
8. Continued commitment to not supplant current General Fund funding for transportation purposes.

The majority of these recommendations are reflected in the Mayor’s proposal. The recommendations to explore other revenue sources and funding tools are discussed in Issue 6 below (Transportation Funding Task Force). However, the proposed legislation does not include levy funding to support audits of levy-funded programs (recommendation #7). Similar to the Move Seattle Levy, the Oversight Committee would be tasked with making a recommendation to the Mayor and Council on a potential levy renewal in 2032.

The proposed composition of the Oversight Committee differs from that of the Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee; a comparison is shown in Table 2. The primary changes are the inclusion of Council-appointed residents representing each Council District, the removal of the requirement for a licensed engineer with bridge and structures experience, the addition of a Get Engaged youth appointee, and the removal of the Chair of the Transportation Committee.

Table 2: Composition of Levy Oversight Committee

Move Seattle Levy (2015)	Mayor’s Levy Proposal (2024)
Four representatives from the transportation modal boards (one each from the pedestrian, bicycle, freight, and transit modal boards)	Four representatives from the transportation modal boards (one each from the pedestrian, bicycle, freight, and transit modal boards) <i>(i.e., no change)</i>
Five Council-appointed residents, including a licensed engineer with bridge and structures experience	Seven Council-appointed residents, with one representative for each Council District
Five Mayor-appointed residents	Five Mayor-appointed residents <i>(i.e., no change)</i>
--	Get Engaged youth appointee
Chair of Transportation Committee	--
City Budget Director	City Budget Director <i>(i.e., no change)</i>
16 Levy Oversight Committee Members	18 Levy Oversight Committee Members

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Adding back direct Councilmember representation on the Oversight Committee.
- B. Revising the composition, roles, or required expertise for Oversight Committee membership.
- C. Allocating levy resources to support Oversight Committee activities such as auditing or other professional services.

Issue 5 – Reporting Requirements

The proposed legislation requires SDOT to produce an annual report on levy spending and project delivery and to annually update a Transportation Improvements financial plan. The legislation also directs City staff to work with the Oversight Committee to determine an evaluation and reporting structure and cadence to support the Oversight Committee’s duties.

This approach is generally consistent with the reporting requirements for the Move Seattle Levy which also required annual reporting, although the Move Seattle Levy was more prescriptive in the details to be included in the annual reports. The Move Seattle Levy specified that annual reporting on each element of the Spending Breakdown include planned spending and deliverables, actual annual spending and deliverables, and cumulative spending and deliverables. The Move Seattle Levy further required a narrative assessment comparing and explaining any deviation in planned and actual spending and deliverables, and it required a summary of how levy investments implemented the adopted modal plans including reporting on leveraged funding. As these requirements were established in the Move Seattle Levy legislation, these basic requirements could not be modified without going back to voters.

However, over the course of the Move Seattle Levy, SDOT developed more extensive [reports](#) and reporting tools than were required by the enabling legislation. These included annual delivery plans, annual reports (including Q1, Q2, and Q3 updates), as well as workplan updates and assessments. SDOT also developed a [Move Seattle dashboard](#) to report on levy accomplishments and a [Capital Projects dashboard](#) to report on individual projects.

The Move Seattle Levy legislation also included a requirement for SDOT to report annually on bridges and structures (including on the condition of structures, an assessment of deficiencies, and a funding plan to address deficiencies). These reports are [posted](#) with the other Move Seattle materials. The City's focus on bridges and structures has increased over the course of the Move Seattle Levy with the closure of the West Seattle Bridge, the Council-requested audit of bridges and SDOT's bridge program,⁵ and the Mayor's proposal to explore funding strategies through a Transportation Funding Task Force (discussed in Issue 6) with the proposed levy.

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Adding requirements for continued dashboard reporting or other Move Seattle Levy reports.
- B. Adding detail on specific information to be included in annual reporting.
- C. Adding reporting requirements on specific issues of interest to the Council. Such issues could also be considered as part of separate legislation (discussed in Issue 7).
- D. No change to legislation; defer to the Oversight Committee and continuity of existing reporting structures.

Issue 6 – Transportation Funding Task Force

The Mayor's proposal calls for the formation of a Transportation Funding Task Force, charged with identifying funding strategies and policy recommendations for sidewalks, bridges, and other transportation assets by the end of 2026. Separate legislation is anticipated to guide the Task Force's formation and scope but has not been introduced for Council consideration. The Executive has asked for an opportunity to present their proposal for how the Transportation Funding Task Force would be established.

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Developing legislation to establish the Transportation Funding Task Force.

⁵ Councilmember Pedersen requested that the City Auditor assess the physical condition and maintenance investments in the City's vehicle bridges. The City Auditor released the [audit](#) in 2020. SDOT most recently [reported](#) progress on the audit recommendations at the March 5, 2024 Transportation Committee meeting.

Issue 7 – Implementation Issues Beyond the Scope of the Levy Legislation

While the proposed legislation establishes the commitments and legal constraints of the levy, Council may have interest in implementation issues that are beyond the scope of this legislation. As examples, the proposed legislation establishes the District Project Fund and the Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program as allowable uses of levy funding, but the legislation does not specify how the programs will be administered. This approach allows flexibility to consider implementation details in future budget deliberations and to be able to make changes in program delivery over time. If requirements for those programs are established in the levy ordinance, future changes to those requirements would not be possible.

As an alternative, the Council could consider companion legislation to express Council’s intent for implementation or to identify specific issues for further analysis. The Council most recently took this approach with the 2023 Low-Income Housing Levy.⁶

The Council may wish to consider:

- A. Developing a companion resolution to the Levy proposal.

Next Steps

The Select Committee held its first meeting on May 7 and is scheduled to meet four more times (May 21, June 4, June 18, and July 2) with two Public Hearings (May 21 and June 4). Central Staff anticipates presenting the contents of this memo at the May 21 meeting. Central Staff is available to work with Councilmembers on potential amendments for discussion at future Select Committee meetings. The current schedule is for the Select Committee to vote on amendments and the resulting legislation on July 2.

If approved by the Select Committee on July 2, the City Council could take a final vote on July 9 to put the measure before voters. Following Council approval and the Mayor’s signature, the City Attorney will certify the official ballot title for filing with King County. The King County filing deadline for the November 2024 general election is August 6, 2024.

Attachments:

1. Central Staff memo on the Mayor’s Draft Transportation Levy Proposal, April 16, 2024.

cc: Ben Noble, Director
Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Yolanda Ho, Supervisory Analyst

⁶ See [Resolution 32093](#) and [Ordinance 126837](#) related to the 2023 Low-Income Housing Levy.



April 16, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy
From: Calvin Chow, Analyst
Subject: Mayor's Draft Transportation Levy Proposal

On April 4, 2024, the Mayor announced a [draft proposal](#) to renew the 2015 Move Seattle Transportation Levy. The draft proposal would raise \$1.35 billion in property tax over eight years. The Mayor's final proposal is expected to be announced in May, and the Council has established the Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy to consider this proposal.

This memo is intended to provide background on transportation funding and property taxes, a summary of the Mayor's draft proposal, and the next steps for submitting a proposal to voters. Central Staff will provide a more thorough review of the final levy proposal once it has been transmitted for Council deliberation.

Transportation Funding Context

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) relies on multiple fund sources. This includes dedicated transportation revenues, such as the voter-approved Move Seattle property tax levy, as well as more fungible sources such as the General Fund, the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), and the Payroll Expense Tax (PET) which can also be used for non-transportation purposes. Table 1 shows SDOT's appropriations in the 2024 Adopted Budget by fund.¹

Table 1: SDOT 2024 Adopted Budget by Fund (\$'s in 1,000's)

Fund Appropriations	2024 Adopted Budget
<i>Dedicated transportation funds</i>	
a. Transportation Fund	\$324,385
b. Move Seattle Levy Fund	\$131,306
c. Transportation Benefit District Fund	\$96,932
d. Streetcar Operations Fund	\$14,387
e. School Safety Traffic and Pedestrian Improvement Fund	\$13,588
f. Central Waterfront Improvement Fund	\$6,044
g. Waterfront LID #6751 Fund	\$350
h. 2024 Multipurpose LTGO Bond Fund (SDOT portion)	\$28,713
<i>Fungible funds</i>	
i. General Fund	\$63,415
j. REET I Capital Fund	\$6,905
k. REET II Capital Fund	\$24,268
l. Payroll Expense Tax Fund	\$1,000
Total	\$711,293

¹ The City uses separate accounting funds to manage legal spending requirements and avoid color-of-money conflicts. In some cases, multiple departments may make expenditures from the same fund. Some funds may include multiple sources of revenue. Table 1 shows only SDOT's appropriations from the named funds.

In 2024, the Move Seattle levy (item b) accounts for \$131.3 million, or approximately 18.5 percent, of SDOT's total spending; this is higher than the anticipated 2024 revenue from Move Seattle (\$110.6 million in 2024). The difference between revenue and spending is due to project and program delivery schedules that can span multiple years. Some of the Move Seattle project spending identified in the 2024 Adopted Budget will be completed in 2025 (appropriations are encumbered when contracts are signed). Approximately \$12 million of the remaining Move Seattle levy fund balance is expected to be appropriated in the 2025 budget.

When considering only dedicated transportation revenue sources, the Move Seattle levy represents a larger share of SDOT's resources. Table 2 shows the estimated 2024 revenue for the Transportation Fund, Move Seattle Levy Fund, Transportation Benefit District Fund, Streetcar Operations Fund, and School Zone Safety and Pedestrian Improvement Fund. Move Seattle property tax revenue (item a, \$110.6 million) accounts for 21 percent of dedicated transportation revenue in 2024. When excluding grants (item k, \$83.7 million) and third-party reimbursements (item l, \$118.7 million)² which can only be used for specific purposes, Move Seattle revenues account for 34 percent of SDOT's dedicated transportation revenue. It is worth noting that property tax is a far more stable revenue source than sales tax, license fees, or other revenues which may fluctuate with the economy.

Table 2: Dedicated Transportation Revenues (\$'s in 1,000's)

Revenue Source (Fund)	Estimated 2024 Revenue
a. Voter-approved Move Seattle property tax (Move Seattle Fund)	\$110,621
b. Voter-approved Sales Tax for transit (0.15 percent, STBD Fund)	\$55,400
c. Commercial Parking Tax (14.5 percent, Transportation Fund)	\$48,857
d. Vehicle License Fees (\$50, STBD Fund)	\$20,615
e. Street Use Fees (Transportation Fund)	\$28,155
f. Plan Review and Inspections (Transportation Fund)	\$17,135
g. Gas Tax (Transportation Fund)	\$14,776
h. Automated Traffic Cameras (SSTPI Fund, Transportation Fund)	\$11,291
i. Streetcar Fares and Operations (Streetcar Operations Fund)	\$4,358
j. Other assorted revenues (Transportation Fund)	\$12,740
k. State and Federal Grants (Transportation Fund)	\$83,703
l. Reimbursements for third-party work (Transportation Fund)	\$118,680
Total	\$526,331
<i>Total excluding Grants (k) and Reimbursements (l)</i>	<i>\$323,948</i>

² Examples of reimbursements include work undertaken at the request of Sound Transit, Washington State Department of Transportation, Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and private utilities.

Property Taxes and the Move Seattle Levy

Seattle relies on property tax revenue for general government purposes, as well as a number of voter-approved measures.³ In 2024, Seattle's median assessed value (AV) home is valued at \$804,000 and will pay \$2,430 in property taxes to Seattle.⁴ A breakdown of these property taxes is shown in Table 3. The voter-approved measures show the years the property tax is in effect; a future vote would be required to extend these levies.

Table 3: City of Seattle 2024 Property Taxes

Seattle Property Taxes	Annual Cost for Median AV Home	Tax Revenue (\$'s in 1,000's)
a. General Expense (non-voted)	\$864	\$318,226
b. Move Seattle – Transportation (2016-2024)	\$300	\$110,621
c. Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (2019-2025)	\$242	\$89,830
d. Election Vouchers (2016-2025)	\$8	\$3,000
e. Medic One/EMS (2020-2025) ⁵	\$182	\$67,258
f. Library (2020-2026)	\$85	\$31,604
g. Low-Income Housing (2024-2030)	\$372	\$130,037
h. Seawall Bond (2013-2042)	\$48	\$16,163
i. Seattle Metropolitan Park District (2015 ongoing) ⁶	\$328	\$115,808
Total	\$2,430	\$882,547

The Move Seattle Levy (item b) was approved by 58.7 percent of Seattle voters in November 2015. The Low-Income Housing Levy renewal (item g) was recently approved by voters in November 2023. The Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy (item c), Election Vouchers Levy (item d), and Medic One/EMS Levy (item e) are set to expire and will be under consideration for renewal in 2025. For more information on property taxes in general, please see Central Staff's March 2023 [memo](#).

³ Growth of the general expense (non-voted) property tax revenue is limited by the lesser of 1% growth per year or the Implicit Price Deflator (a measure of inflation), plus the value of new construction and remodels. This limit was first established by Initiative 747 in 2001 and subsequently affirmed by state legislature in 2007. Voter-approved measures are not subject to this limit.

⁴ Including all property taxes (City of Seattle, schools, King County, Port of Seattle, Sound Transit, and others) the median AV home will pay \$7,227 in property taxes in 2024.

⁵ The Medic One/EMS Levy was approved by King County Voters. Seattle receives the portion of property tax revenues raised in Seattle.

⁶ The Seattle Metropolitan Park District (SMPD) is a separate governmental entity with the same boundaries as the City of Seattle and a governing board comprised of all Seattle City Councilmembers. SMPD revenues fund Seattle Parks and Recreation. Seattle voters approved the formation of the SMPD in 2014, which authorized a general expense SMPD levy of up to \$0.75/\$1,000 assessed value. The SMPD may raise additional property taxes through a ballot measure ([RCW 35.61.210](#)).

The Move Seattle Levy was itself a renewal of an earlier 2006 transportation levy; Move Seattle authorized the collection of \$930 million of property tax over 9 years. Move Seattle's enabling legislation ([Ordinance 124796](#)) included a [spending breakdown](#) for levy programs and projects, which SDOT uses to report progress (see Move Seattle [dashboard](#) and [annual reports](#)). The legislation established the anticipated total 9-year spending for three categories of Move Seattle programs (Safe Routes, Congestion Relief, and Maintenance & Repair) which guided SDOT's budget over the course of the levy.

As a commitment to not supplant existing transportation funding, the legislation included a requirement for a minimum contribution of General Fund for transportation. For 2024, the minimum General Fund requirement (with the inflation factor included) is \$49.3 million.

The legislation also established the 16-member Move Seattle [Levy Oversight Committee \(LOC\)](#). The LOC meets monthly to monitor implementation and is tasked with making a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council on the advisability of proposing a levy renewal. At the March 19, 2024, Transportation Committee, the LOC [presented](#) preliminary recommendations supporting renewal of the Move Seattle Levy. The LOC's final recommendations are expected to Mayor and City Council by April 30, 2024.

Mayor's Draft 2024 Transportation Levy Proposal

The Mayor's draft proposal is to renew the transportation levy at \$1.35 billion over an 8-year term. This is a higher amount and shorter term than the existing Move Seattle Levy (\$930 million over a 9-year term). An inflation-only adjusted renewal of Move Seattle would be approximately \$1.2 billion over eight years.

The draft proposal groups spending under 11 proposed categories. While these categories differ from the previous Move Seattle categories, SDOT has provided a comparison between the Move Seattle Levy and the draft proposal shown in Table 4. Note that some projects and programs support multiple objectives but are categorized under their primary function.

Table 4: Comparison of Move Seattle and Draft Proposal Spending

Category	Move Seattle (2015)		Draft Proposal (2024)	
	9-year Revenue	% share	8-Year Revenue	% share
a. Repave and improve streets	\$253 million	27.2%	\$423 million	31.3%
b. Bridge maintenance	\$149 million	16.0%	\$218 million	16.1%
c. Improve transit connections	\$165 million	17.7%	\$121 million	9.0%
d. Build and repair sidewalks	\$103 million	11.1%	\$109 million	8.1%
e. Reduce traffic collisions	\$30 million	3.2%	\$107 million	7.9%
f. Install and maintain traffic signals	\$66 million	7.1%	\$100 million	7.4%
g. Expand bike lane network	\$72 million	7.7%	\$94 million	7.0%
h. Add lighting and activate public spaces	--	0.0%	\$57 million	4.2%
i. Address climate change	\$30 million	3.2%	\$49 million	3.6%
j. Build projects with community	\$25 million	2.7%	\$48 million	3.6%
k. Make freight improvements	\$38 million	4.1%	\$25 million	1.9%
Total	\$931 million		\$1,351 million	

The draft proposal identifies “candidate projects” in each category to illustrate potential improvements, but does not provide cost estimates or allocations for individual projects. The Mayor is seeking public comment through an on-line community engagement [hub](#) and other outreach events. The Mayor’s final proposal is expected in May 2024.

The Mayor’s final proposal may identify new spending proposals, adjust the allocation of spending across categories, or modify the total size of the proposed levy. The final proposal will include legislation authorizing the submission of the proposal to voters, which will include the specific provisions governing spending, reporting, and oversight. Once transmitted to Council, Central Staff will review the final proposal and identify potential issues to assist Council deliberations.

Legislative Schedule

The Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy has been established to consider the Mayor’s final proposal. The Select Committee is scheduled to meet five times (May 7, May 21, June 4, June 18, and July 2), with two Public Hearings (May 21 and June 4). If approved by the Select Committee on July 2, the City Council would take a final vote on July 9 to put the measure before voters. Following Council approval and Mayor’s signature, the City Attorney will write the official ballot title for filing with King County. The King County filing deadline for the November 2024 general election is August 6, 2024.

cc: Ben Noble, Director
Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Yolanda Ho, Supervisory Analyst



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

2024 Transportation Levy – Issue ID

CALVIN CHOW, ANALYST

SELECT COMMITTEE ON 2024 TRANSPORTATION LEVY

MAY 21, 2024

Mayor's 2024 Transportation Levy Proposal

- The proposal is for a **\$1.45 billion, eight-year** property tax levy to renew the existing Move Seattle Levy.
- For the Seattle median assessed value home (\$804,000 in 2024), the annual property tax bill would be **\$469**.
- For comparison with the existing Move Seattle Levy:
 - Move Seattle was a **\$930 million, nine-year** levy.
 - Seattle median home property tax bill for 2024 was **\$300**.
 - An inflation-only renewal of the Move Seattle Levy would be approximately a **\$1.2 billion, eight-year** levy.

Levy Spending Comparison

Category	Move Seattle (2015)		Mayor's Proposal (2024)	
	9-year Revenue	% share	8-Year Revenue	% share
a. Vision Zero, School & Neighborhood Safety	\$55 million	5.9%	\$162 million	11.2%
b. Street Maintenance and Modernization	\$253 million	27.2%	\$423 million	29.2%
c. Bridges and Structures	\$149 million	16.0%	\$221 million	15.2%
d. Transit Corridors and Connections	\$165 million	17.7%	\$145 million	10.0%
e. Pedestrian Safety	\$103 million	11.1%	\$135 million	9.3%
f. Signals and Operations	\$66 million	7.1%	\$100 million	6.9%
g. Bicycle Safety	\$72 million	7.7%	\$114 million	7.9%
h. People Streets and Public Safety	--	0.0%	\$66 million	4.6%
i. Climate and Resiliency	\$30 million	3.2%	\$59 million	4.1%
j. Freight and Goods Movement	\$38 million	4.1%	\$25 million	1.7%
Total:	\$931 million		\$1,450 million	

[Attachment A](#) to CB 120788 provides details of proposed spending and anticipated deliverables.

Council Bill (CB) 120788

- Places the levy proposal on the **November 2024** General Election.
- Establishes the **terms and conditions** of levy collection and the allowable spending of levy proceeds.
- Once approved by voters, these terms **cannot be changed** without going back to voters.
- Three approaches to consider for potential changes to the levy or to establish Council direction:
 1. Binding commitments through amendments to CB 120788.
 2. Separate, companion legislation to CB 120788.
 3. Defer to Council's annual budget process or future legislation.

Issue 1 – General Terms of Levy

- Legislation proposes a **\$1.45 billion, eight-year** property tax levy.
- Requires a **minimum annual General Fund appropriation** for transportation purposes as part of the City's budget (no supplantation). Consistent with Move Seattle Levy.
- Options:
 - A. Change the \$1.45 billion size of the levy.
 - B. Change the eight-year term of the levy.
 - C. Modify General Fund requirement or other general provisions.

Issue 2 – Legal Spending Requirements

- Legislation identifies **anticipated spending** for levy programs (in Attachment A), but **does not mandate** required spending levels.
- This approach provides more **flexibility** during budget to adapt to changing conditions or emerging needs.
- Move Seattle Levy established total appropriation requirements for 3 categories of spending and a specific funding commitment for one project.
- Options:
 - A. Add spending requirements for categories of levy spending.
 - B. Add spending requirements for specific projects or programs.
 - C. No change; defer to future budget, levy oversight, and reporting.

Issue 3 – Allocations/Levy Commitments

- Attachment A establishes **allowable uses** of levy proceeds and identifies **anticipated spending** for 10 categories of levy programs.
- Some programs **identify specific locations** for initial investments/deliverables.
- New programs of note include the **District Project Fund** and the **Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program**.
- Options:
 - A. Authorize levy spending for programs not in the Mayor's proposal.
 - B. Adjust anticipated spending across levy projects and programs.
 - C. Modify specific project commitments identified in Attachment A.

Issue 4 – Levy Oversight Committee

- Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee presented recommendations at May 7 Select Committee. **Most recommendations reflected in proposal.**
- Recommendation for **levy funding to support oversight capacity**, including potential audit of levy programs, was not included in proposal.
- Proposed **composition** of Oversight Committee differs from Move Seattle (shown on next slide).
- Options:
 - A. Add back direct Councilmember representation on Oversight Committee.
 - B. Revise composition, roles, or expertise requirements.
 - C. Allocate levy resources for Oversight Committee activities.

Oversight Committee Composition

Move Seattle Levy (2015)	Mayor's Levy Proposal (2024)
Four representatives from the transportation modal boards (one each from the pedestrian, bicycle, freight, and transit modal boards)	Four representatives from the transportation modal boards (one each from the pedestrian, bicycle, freight, and transit modal boards)
Five Council-appointed residents, including a licensed engineer with bridge and structures experience	Seven Council-appointed residents, with one representative for each Council District
Five Mayor-appointed residents	Five Mayor-appointed residents
--	Get Engaged youth appointee
Chair of Transportation Committee	--
City Budget Director	City Budget Director
16 Levy Oversight Committee Members	18 Levy Oversight Committee Members

Issue 5 – Reporting Requirements

- Legislation requires **annual reporting**, consistent with Move Seattle. However, Move Seattle included more specifics on what is included in reports.
- Over the course of Move Seattle, SDOT developed **dashboard** tools and **supplemental reports** for the Oversight Committee and the public.
- Expectation is to maintain this more detailed reporting, but this is not specifically called out as a requirement in the legislation.
- Options:
 - A. Add requirement for dashboard reporting or other reports.
 - B. Add detail on specific information to include in annual reports.
 - C. Add reporting on specific issues (Move Seattle highlighted bridges).
 - D. No change; defer to Oversight Committee and continuity of existing reporting.

Issue 6 – Transportation Funding Task Force

- Mayor's proposal calls for creating a Funding Task Force for **sidewalks, bridges,** and other transportation asset.
- Legislation provides for **levy funding** to support this work, but separate legislation to create the task force has not been transmitted.
- Legislation to create the task force could be considered on a separate **schedule** from the levy legislation.
- Options:
 - A. Develop legislation to establish task force.

Issue 7 – Other Implementation Issues

- Legislation establishes allowed uses and legal restrictions which cannot be changed without going back to voters.
- Council may have interest in implementation issues that are **beyond the scope** of this legislation.
- In considering other levy proposals, Council has, at times, developed **companion legislation** to express Council's intent or identify issues for further analysis.
- Options:
 - A. Develop a companion resolution to the levy legislation.

**Questions?
Follow-up?**