

Levy Oversight Committee Report to Council

Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee
March 19, 2024

Agenda

- Oversight Committee purpose
- Oversight Committee ordinance recommendations
- Recommendations

Bottom Line Up Front

- The LOC recommends voters approve a new levy after the current one expires next year.
- The LOC will send final recommendations to the mayor and council by March 2024, as outlined in the ordinance.

Levy Oversight Committee Members

As of March 2024

Name	Appointing authority
Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Secretary	Mayor
Lisa Bogardus	Mayor
Samuel Ferrara	Mayor
Tyler Blackwell	Council
Clara Cantor	Mayor
Dennis Gathard	Council
Alex Bejaran Estevez	Council
Vacant	Bicycle Advisory Board
Inga Manskopf, Co-chair	Council
Ashwin Bhumbra	Transit Advisory Board
Jessica Nguyen	Mayor
Geri Poor, Vice Chair	Freight Advisory Board
Delaney Lind	Pedestrian Advisory Board
Kevin Werner, Co-chair	Council
Councilmember Rob Saka	
Saroja Reddy (City Budget Office delegate)	



Oversight Committee Purpose

The Levy to Move Seattle Oversight Committee will serve as a vital mechanism of accountability on how levy revenues are spent.

The Oversight Committee:

- is an advisory body that monitors revenues, expenditures, and program and project implementation.
- advises the City Council, the Mayor, and SDOT on responding to program and project cost savings or overruns.
- reviews SDOT's program and project priorities and financial plans and makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding the spending of levy proceeds.
- publishes annual reports to the Mayor, City Council and people of Seattle.

Ordinance 124796, Section 9

Legislation available on SDOT's Levy to Move Seattle website - [CB118402FINAL.pdf\(seattle.gov\)](#)



Recommendation regarding new levy

Between January 1 and April 30 of 2024, the Oversight Committee is requested to make a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council regarding the advisability of proposing to the voters of Seattle another levy to authorize additional property taxes for implementation of transportation improvements.

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;
- b) the availability of alternative revenue sources that provide a more direct link between the tax or fee paid and the use of the City's transportation system; and
- c) the underlying need for funding to support the uses identified in Section 6.

The Mayor and Council will consider any timely recommendations that may have been made by the Oversight Committee.

Ordinance 124796, Section 9

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SDOT Funding Sources (2024)



Preparing recommendations

- Levy Implementation review: From spring 2022-summer 2023, SDOT provided overviews of all 30 levy programs to the LOC.
- Availability of other revenue sources: Oversight Committee identified some other sources and received assessment of other transportation-linked sources from SDOT staff in November.
- Underlying need for future levy: Oversight Committee & SDOT collaborating on linking STP with potential future funding sources.
- Reflections on oversight function and developing recommendations for improvement.
- *Final letter to council and mayor will be completed in April 2024.*

Program presentations LOC has received

Levy Program	Levy Category
Vision Zero corridors	Safe Routes
Safe Routes to School	Safe Routes
Markings	Safe Routes
Transportation Operations	
Bicycle Safety	Safe Routes
Sidewalk Safety Repair	Safe Routes
Curb Ramps and Crossings	Safe Routes
Neighborhood Street Fund	Safe Routes
Arterial Asphalt and Concrete	Maintenance & Repair
Arterial Major Maintenance	Maintenance & Repair
Bridge Spot Repair	Maintenance & Repair
Bridge Seismic Improvements	Maintenance & Repair
Fairview Bridge	Maintenance & Repair
Bridge Replacement Planning and Design	Maintenance & Repair
Stairway rehabilitation	Maintenance & Repair
Urban Forestry - Tree Trimming and Planting	Maintenance & Repair
SPU - South Park Drainage partnership	Maintenance & Repair

Levy Program	Levy Category
Multimodal improvements	Congestion Relief
Traffic Signal Timing Improvements	Congestion Relief
Intelligent Transp. Systems (ITS)	Congestion Relief
Transit Spot Improvements	Congestion Relief
Graham St light rail connections*	Congestion Relief
Northgate Bridge	Congestion Relief
Accessible Mt Baker	Congestion Relief
New sidewalks and Crossing Improvements	Congestion Relief
SPU - Broadview	Congestion Relief
Urban Trails and Bikeways	Congestion Relief
Lander Overpass	Congestion Relief
East Marginal Way	Congestion Relief
Freight Spot Improvements	Congestion Relief

*No Presentation: From 2021 & 2022 annual reports: Sound Transit currently shows the S Graham St light rail station opening in 2031. In response to Levy program revenue shortfalls and Sound Transit's timing, the funds have been removed from this program. When Sound Transit's timing changes, SDOT will address the City's funding contribution.

Program implementation overview

- Of the 30 programs, SDOT is meeting or exceeding 27 of the 2015 goals.
- The bike program will get close to meeting 2015 goals and will exceed 2018 amended goals, though some specific projects outlined in levy will not be completed.
- The multimodal goals will not be met by the end of 2024, given project schedule changes.
- The Graham Street light rail connection is indefinitely postponed.
- Though Vision Zero “projects” are meeting goals, the city is no closer to meeting the goal of eliminating traffic-related deaths than in 2015.
- While the number of bridges receiving seismic upgrades is meeting goals, the specific bridges are different than the original goal.

Successes

- Northgate Bridge (Now John Lewis Memorial Bridge)
- Lander Street bridge
- Fairview Bridge
- Safe Routes to School
- Neighborhood Street Fund
- Tree planting
- Partnerships with SPU

Recommendations

- 1. The LOC strongly recommends a future transportation package that includes a bold levy with increased funding over current levy for the following reasons:**
 1. Safety
 2. Equity
 3. Climate
 4. Accessibly
 5. Affordability



Recommendations

1. **The LOC strongly recommends a future transportation package that includes a bold levy with increased funding over current levy.**
2. Beyond and following the levy, the LOC also believes that the city must also develop a full and broader transportation package **utilizing additional revenue sources** to address deteriorating roadways and bridges.
3. The LOC recommends the city also adopt funding tools that support a variety of projects and programs (see appendix B for potential alternative funding approaches).
4. SDOT should be prepared to increase staff capacity quickly as needed to execute the next levy.



Recommendations

5. **Racial and Social Equity** is a high priority in considering where SDOT should focus its efforts.
6. The LOC recommends the next levy not overpromise and ensure flexibility through its lifetime. Bold leadership from city leaders will be needed to successfully implement future transportation programs.
7. Considering the size and breadth of transportation levies, the LOC recommends **improving the oversight function for future levies**. Specific funding should be included in the next Levy Ordinance to provide for a future LOC to request and conduct audits of levy-funded transportation programs.
8. The next levy should be additive to current City transportation funding and **should not supplant current general funds**.



What's next?

- LOC letter will be transmitted to Council and Mayor in April.
- LOC will continue to meet and oversee Levy to Move Seattle spending.
- As the Council and Mayor develop levy proposal for voters, the LOC is available to advise and support.