

March 11, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Committee
From: Calvin Chow, Analyst
Subject: Seattle Transportation Plan – Resolution 32131

On March 5, 2024, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) presented an initial [briefing](#) on the [Seattle Transportation Plan](#) (STP) to the Transportation Committee. The Transportation Committee anticipates continued discussion of the STP and the resolution to adopt the plan ([Resolution 32131](#)) on March 19th. Committee vote on the legislation is not anticipated until April 2nd. This memo summarizes the STP and identifies potential issues for Council consideration.

Seattle Transportation Plan

The STP is a 20-year policy guidance document. The plan consolidates and builds upon previous transportation planning documents, including formally adopted modal plans and internal SDOT policy initiatives. It is largely a reaffirmation and restatement of Seattle’s transportation policies, and calls attention to emerging policy areas such as curbside management and non-transportation uses of the right-of-way. Previous transportation planning efforts include:

- Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2016)
- Pedestrian Master Plan (adopted 2009, updated 2017)
- Transit Master Plan (adopted 2012, updated 2016)
- Bicycle Master Plan (adopted 2014)
- Freight Master Plan (adopted 2016)
- Vision Zero Action Plan, Transportation Asset Management Plan, New Mobility Playbook, Transportation Equity Workplan, and various other SDOT studies and initiatives

SDOT began work on the STP in May 2022. SDOT’s work included a three-phase community engagement process including in-person community meetings, targeted outreach to community-based organizations, and an on-line interactive engagement hub. SDOT’s outreach process is detailed in Chapter 2 and Appendix B of the plan.

While the STP does not include a specific funding plan, it is intended to influence future funding decisions and SDOT’s delivery of programs and projects. The plan leads with a vision statement and frames this vision in six goals. The plan also describes key moves (strategies) and performance measures for each goal.

The STP's vision statement is:

- Seattle is an equitable, vibrant, and diverse city where moving around is safe, fair, and sustainable. All people and businesses can access their daily needs and feel connected to their community.

The STP's goals are:

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

Part II of the document includes a more detailed focus on eight functional elements within the STP. These functional elements provide detailed actions and performance measures specific to each element. These functional elements update the previous modal plans (Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Transit Master Plan, and Freight Master Plan) and elevate other policy considerations including management of curb-space and the use of the right-of-way for purposes beyond transportation. The STP's eight functional elements are:

- Transit
- Freight and Urban Goods Movement
- Bicycle and E-Mobility
- Pedestrian
- People Streets and Public Spaces
- Vehicle
- Curbside Management
- New and Emerging Mobility

A major focus of the STP is to integrate transportation planning across travel modes and to address potential conflicts between pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight, and vehicle needs. Part II of the STP draws on key policies from the Comprehensive Plan, the Complete Streets Ordinance, and Streets Illustrated (the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual) to guide decisions on allocating right-of-way and considering tradeoffs between modes.

Under the City's previous modal plans, transportation improvement projects were identified by specific mode in each individual plan. The STP includes a consolidated list of 81 large capital projects (detailed in Appendix A), each identifying multiple affected modes and revealing

potentially competing priorities. The STP does not resolve these conflicts, but it provides a framework for considering the tradeoffs (described as the Network Integration Process). Identifying potential conflicts early will help inform project scoping and funding decisions. Ultimately, specific modal conflicts will need to be resolved as part of the project development and early design work on individual projects.

Plan Implementation and Considerations for Levy Renewal

While the STP provides a long-term vision for transportation in Seattle, implementation will depend on future funding and budget decisions. The STP's implementation strategy includes prioritization of the 81 large capital projects and high-level performance metrics, but it does not include a specific funding proposal or recommendation for renewal of the Move Seattle Transportation Levy.

The primary, city-wide performance metrics identified in the STP include measuring:

- Number of traffic deaths and serious injuries
- Greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles travelled
- Travel mode share and access to frequent transit networks
- Income spent on transportation and infrastructure condition

Each functional element of the STP also includes performance metrics specific to the individual element. As examples, the Transit Element includes measuring transit rider safety based on customer surveys, the Freight Element includes measuring the percentage of major truck streets with fair or better pavement condition, and the Bicycle and E-Mobility Element includes measuring the percentage of households with quarter-mile access to the bike network.

The STP calls for development of an STP Implementation Plan, based on available funding and informed by the budget process. The STP Implementation Plan would be updated every four years, and SDOT would report progress on a biennial basis. SDOT would prepare the first STP Implementation Plan by September 2025, which would be informed by a potential renewal of the Move Seattle Transportation Levy.

While the STP does not include a specific proposal for a levy renewal, it provides a framework for funding discussions. The large capital projects identified in the STP would be candidates for a levy package, and a levy proposal will need to weigh the balance between funding on-going operation and maintenance functions and new investments.

The Executive anticipates releasing a public draft of a levy proposal in April with transmittal of legislation to Council in May. Under this schedule, Council would deliberate on the proposed legislation in May/June and take final action in July. The filing deadline for placing a measure on the November ballot is August 6, 2024.

Relationship to the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The STP was developed in conjunction with the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Update (One Seattle Plan). The Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD) released a [draft](#) of the plan for public review on March 5, 2024.

The One Seattle Plan addresses Seattle’s anticipated growth over the next twenty years and includes a Transportation Element with goals and policies consistent with the STP. The One Seattle Plan includes a new place-type hierarchy¹ for the Future Land Use Map, using access to transit as a factor in applying these place-type designations.

The One Seattle Plan is a higher-level planning document than the STP, and includes other elements such as housing, utilities, and economic development. The Transportation Element organizes policies around the One Seattle growth strategy, street design, expanding transportation options, reducing climate emissions, supporting economic development, safe travel for all (Vision Zero), regional connectivity, operations & maintenance, and funding. The Transportation Element includes the STP’s Transit Capital Investment Corridors map, Frequent Transit Network Targets map, Link Light Rail Expansions and RapidRide Corridors map, Future Bicycle and E-Mobility Network map, and Freight Network map.

Legislative Considerations

Resolution 32131 is on the March 12, 2024 Introduction and Referral Calendar for referral to Transportation Committee. This legislation would approve the STP and includes 8 sections:

- [Section 1](#) – Approve the STP
- [Section 2](#) – Acknowledge that funding decisions are made through the budget process
- [Section 3](#) – Highlight the STP prioritization framework as an approach to identify future projects and programs
- [Section 4](#) – Specify the development of the STP Implementation Plan by September 2025
- [Section 5](#) – Specify biennial reporting of progress and performance measures
- [Section 6](#) – Specify major updates to the STP at least every 10 years
- [Section 7](#) – Allow SDOT to administratively update maps in the STP to reflect completion of projects and other condition changes
- [Section 8](#) – Supersede the Transit Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Freight Master Plan, and Pedestrian Master Plan with the STP

The STP is a broad policy document and there are tradeoffs and conflicts inherent to its different goals and elements. Part of the plan’s purpose is to acknowledge these conflicts up

¹ The proposed place-type hierarchy is Regional Center (previously Urban Center), Urban Center (previously Urban Village), Neighborhood Center (a new designation for community/commercial nodes), and Urban Neighborhood (a new designation covering the remainder of Seattle land uses).

front, while resolving conflicts will depend on how SDOT implements individual projects and programs. If the Council wishes to emphasize specific priorities, the resolution could be amended to add new legislative language. Such an amendment could:

- Emphasize or highlight specific values, priorities, or policies.
- Provide Council direction or expectations for the development of the levy renewal proposal.
- Revise expectations for the STP Implementation Plan, STP reporting, or future updates to the STP.

If there are issues in the STP that that Council does not see addressed to its satisfaction, the Council could hold off adopting the plan until those issues are resolved or changes are made to the plan. SDOT prepared a non-project [Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) (Final EIS) for the STP, and any proposed changes to the plan that are beyond the scope of the Final EIS may require additional environmental review.

The Council may wish to amend the legislation to acknowledge the continued work of the Pedestrian Advisory Board, Bicycle Advisory Board, Freight Advisory Board, and Transit Advisory Board as the modal plans are superseded. The approving legislation for the individual modal plans called for advisory board engagement, and SDOT intends to continue working with these advisory boards on STP implementation.

Next Steps

The Transportation Committee anticipates continued discussion of the STP and consideration of legislation at the March 19th committee meeting. Committee vote on the legislation is not anticipated until the April 2nd committee meeting at the earliest.

Central Staff is available to assist Councilmembers in developing any proposed amendments.

cc: Ben Noble, Director
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