



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Transportation, Waterfront, and Seattle Center Committee Agenda

Thursday, February 19, 2026

9:30 AM

Council Chamber, City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Rob Saka, Chair
Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Vice-Chair
Dionne Foster, Member
Robert Kettle, Member
Eddie Lin, Member

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

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Transportation, Waterfront, and Seattle Center
Committee
Agenda
February 19, 2026 - 9:30 AM

Meeting Location:

Council Chamber, City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

Committee Website:

<https://seattle.gov/council/transportation-waterfront-and-seattle-center>

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. Please register in advance in order to be recognized by the Chair. Details on how to register for 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.

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.

Please submit written comments no later than four business hours prior to the start of the meeting to ensure that they are distributed to Councilmembers prior to the meeting. Comments may be submitted at Council@seattle.gov or at Seattle City Hall, Attn: Council Public Comment, 600 4th Ave., Floor 2, Seattle, WA 98104. Business hours are considered 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Comments received after that time will be distributed after the meeting to Councilmembers and included as part of the public record.

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

A. Call To Order

B. Approval of the Agenda

C. Public Comment

Members of the public may address items on the agenda and matters within the purview of the committee. Please register in advance to be recognized by the Chair.

D. Items of Business

1. Seattle Center Overview

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)

Briefing and Discussion

Presenters: Diamatris Winston, Acting Director, and Karin Butler, Seattle Center

2. Transportation Funding Task Force Update

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)

Briefing and Discussion

Presenters: Bill LaBorde and Sarah Strand, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT); Calvin Chow, Council Central Staff

E. Adjournment



Legislation Text

File #: Inf 2835, **Version:** 1

Seattle Center Overview



Seattle Center - 2026 Department Overview

Presentation Outline

1. Who We Are and What We Do
2. Organizational Structure and Budget
3. 2026 Priorities
4. Questions & Discussion



Seattle Center At-A-Glance

- **74-Acre Campus, 40-Acre Green Space:** We are both a regional destination for events and a green space for growing neighborhoods – Uptown, Belltown, South Lake Union, Queen Ann
- **11-12M Annual Visits:** Most visited arts and cultural destination in the Pacific Northwest
- **An Economic Engine:** Over \$2B in regional economic impact, supporting over 18,600 jobs in the creative, cultural, tourism, hospitality, and event sectors
- **Home to over 30 Independent Organizations:** Arts, culture sports and entertainment come together to form one community
- **Largely Self-Funded:** We generate revenue to cover 70% of our expenses
- **Waterfront Park:** Seattle Center also manages public safety and maintenance operations at Waterfront Park, expanding our services to the City beyond the campus borders
- **240+ Full-Time Staff** and 500+ intermittent event staff in all aspects of campus and waterfront operations
- **10 Labor Unions** are essential partners in our mission



Vision

Seattle Center is where community comes together – an iconic, inclusive destination that delights and inspires the human spirit.

Mission

Seattle Center operates vibrant gathering places and venues, creates exceptional events and experiences, and anchors our arts and cultural community.

Seattle Center achieves this by:

- Bringing our region's many communities together in a safe, welcoming, and inclusive place
- Maintaining, operating and reinvesting in public spaces and venues that are beautiful, state-of-the-art, environmentally sustainable, and resilient
- Enabling our arts, culture, sports and entertainment organizations to thrive, innovate, and better serve our communities

Seattle Center Campus

Seattle Center Owned and Operated

- 5th & Mercer Building
- Armory Food & Event Hall
- Artists at Play
- Broad Street Green
- Exhibition Hall
- Fisher Pavilion
- International Fountain and Lawn
- Mural Amphitheatre
- McCaw Hall
- Northwest Courtyards
- South Fountain Lawn

Seattle Center Leased Spaces

- Chihuly Garden & Glass
- Climate Pledge Arena
- Cornish Playhouse
- KEXP
- MOPOP
- PNB Phelps Center
- Seattle Children's Theatre
- Seattle Center Monorail
- Seattle Opera
- Seattle Rep
- SIFF
- The Vera Project

Separately Owned and Operated

- Memorial Stadium (SPS)
- Pacific Science Center
- Space Needle



Climate Pledge Arena (CPA)

A Seattle Center anchor tenant and key campus partner

Opened in 2021, privately operated by Oak View Group (OVG) under a long-term lease with Seattle Center (39 years + one 8-year extension option)

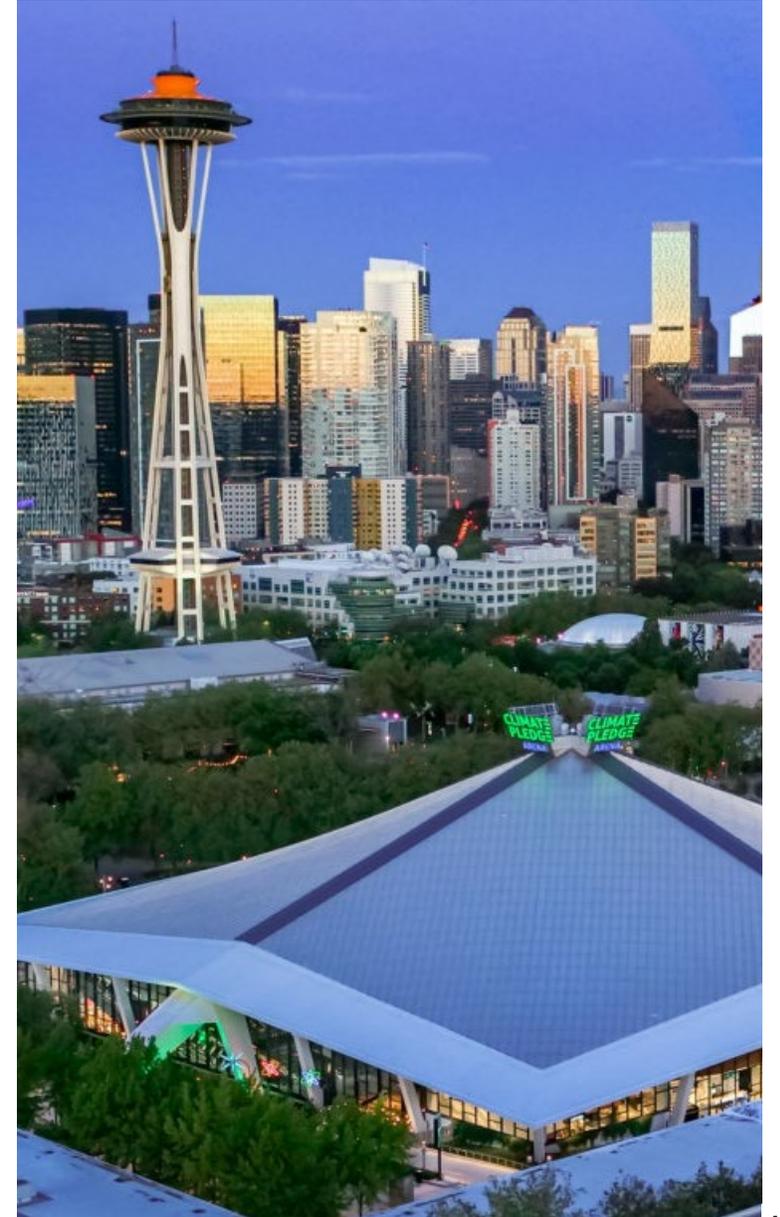
Home of:

- NHL Seattle Kraken
- WNBA Seattle Storm
- PWHL Seattle Torrent

In 2025, CPA welcomed approximately 1.73 million visitors across all events, including concerts, NCAA tournaments, family shows, comedy tours, and major limited-stop productions.

The arena hosts 200+ events annually, reflecting its continued strength as a national venue which adds value and activation to the Seattle Center campus.

Potential home for a future NBA expansion team





Waterfront Park



Waterfront Park Operations

- Seattle Center provides a dedicated, specialized City maintenance team and a 24-7 public safety team
- Waterfront Park is managed in partnership with non-profit Friends of Waterfront Park
- Free public programming and events year round
- Oversight Committee to ensure accountability and Mayor/Council reporting
- Seattle Center also collaborates with SDOT and Seattle Parks for Waterfront Park's success



2025 Year End Stats

Seattle Center is the most visited arts and cultural destination in the Pacific Northwest and attracts a wide audience. This is fueled by marquee events like Winterfest, Bite of Seattle, Festál, and activities at Climate Pledge Arena and Marion Oliver McCaw Hall.

**#1
in the
City**

**#1
in the
State**

**#22
in the
Nation**



2025 Year End Stats

Seattle Center

- Visits: 11-12M

Waterfront Park

- 2025 Visits: 9M+
- Pier 62 activation
- Overlook Walk fully opened

Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

- Total Guests: 308,621
- Event Days: 172
- Total Attendance Average: 1,342

Parking Transactions: 361,497

Public Programs:

Festál & Winterfest

- 25 Festál festivals, 400K+ attendees
- Winterfest + Christmas Market: 1.3M+ combined visits
- 30+ resident partners

Seattle/King County Clinic

- 10 YEARS OF IMPACT
- 33,000+ patients served
- \$30M+ donated services

Monorail Ridership

- 2025 Ridership: 2.9M

Climate Pledge Arena

- 1,703,995M (162 events)

Visitor Origin Breakdown

- Engagement Average Dwell Time: 145 minutes (indicating sustained, multi-venue visits rather than pass-through activity)
- Stability: Visits are down ~2–3% year-over-year, consistent with regional normalization trends following post-pandemic rebound years.
- Visitation remains well above pre-recovery levels, with a +17.5% three-year trend

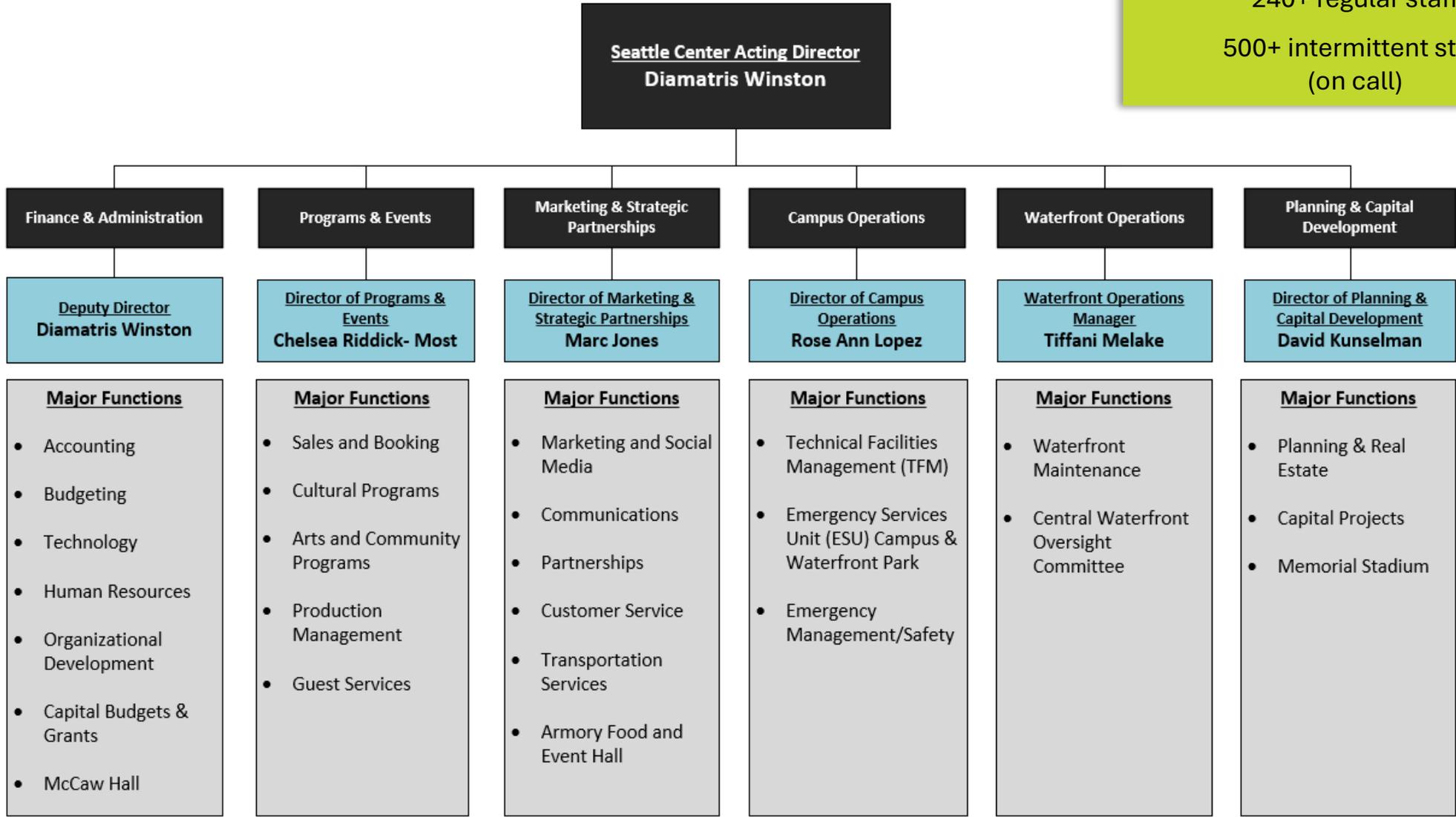


Ethnicity

- BIPOC 47.1%
 - Hispanic/Latino 11.5%
 - Black 7.3%
 - Asian 19.5%
 - Two or More Races 7.1%
- White 52.9%

Seattle Center Organizational Structure

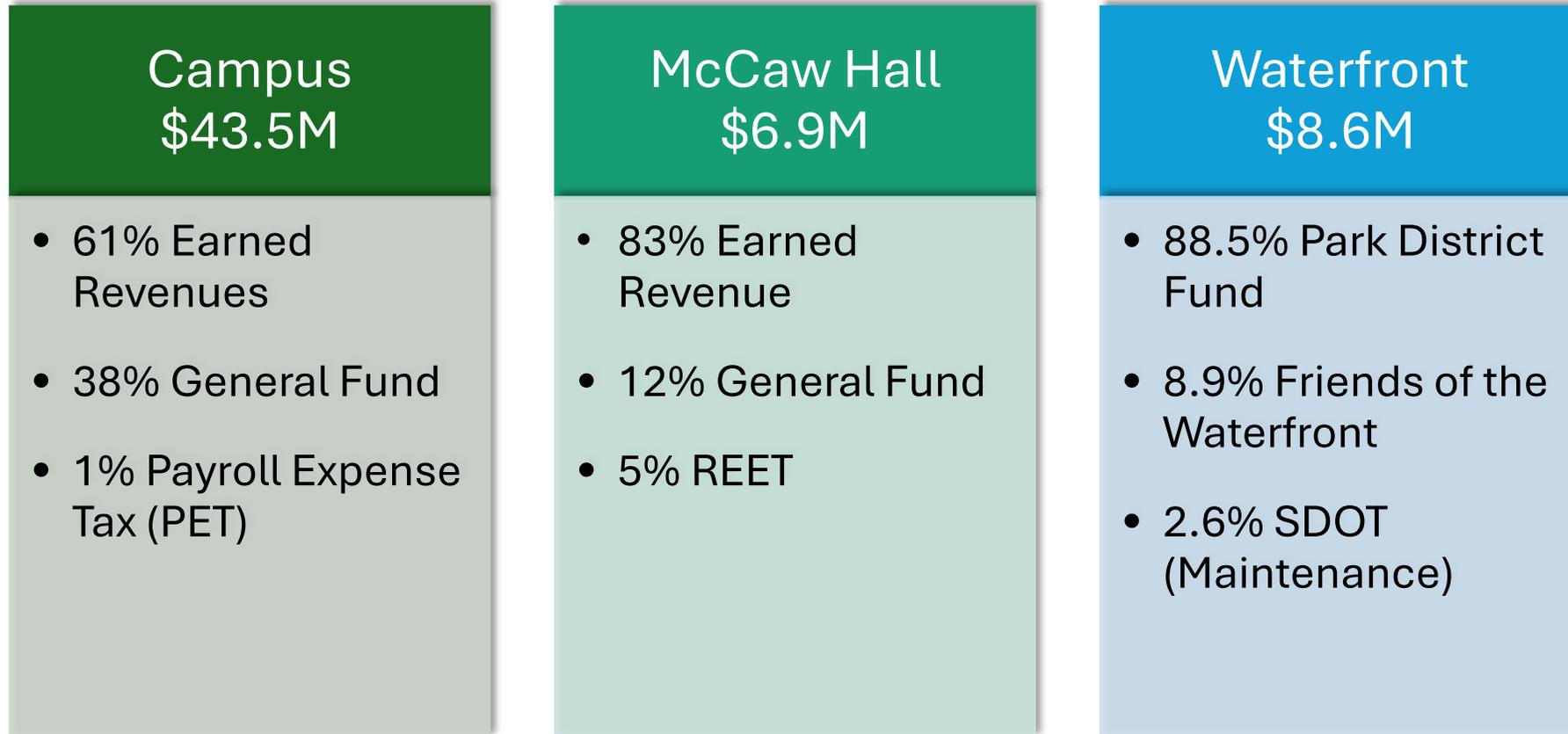
Seattle Center employees include:
 240+ regular staff
 500+ intermittent staff
 (on call)



Budget Snapshot

	2024	2025	2026	2026
	Actuals	Adopted	Endorsed	Adopted
Department Support				
General Fund Support	17,799,251	17,263,345	18,253,098	17,583,310
Other Funding - Operating	36,382,566	38,412,748	39,972,302	41,469,962
Total Operations	54,181,817	55,676,093	58,225,400	59,053,272
Capital Support				
General Fund Support	-111	-	-	310,000
Other Funding - Capital	8,500,546	16,756,541	10,025,510	38,032,213
Total Capital	8,500,435	16,756,541	10,025,510	38,342,213
Total Appropriations	62,682,252	72,432,634	68,250,909	97,395,485
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	248.93	257.93	257.93	259.93

2026 Operating Budget Structure and Income Sources



Seattle Center Campus Business Model – “Doing Well to Do Good”

61% of Operating Income is earned from:

- Leases
- Parking
- Event Rentals
- Sponsorship
- Food & Beverage
- Ticketing
- Other strategic partnerships

38% of Operating Income is publicly funded from:

- General Fund
- Grants
- Other City funds

Capital Funding has historically been primarily from:

- REET
- Grants
- Public/Private Partnerships

2026 Capital Budget Structure and Sources



- 71% 2027 LTGO Bond Fund B with debt service paid by REET (Memorial Stadium)
- 23% REET I Capital Fund (Buildings and Campus Improvements)
- 3% Federal Transit Administration Grant (Monorail)
- 1% General Fund (Replace Fire Alarm System Fiberoptics)
- 2% REET I Capital Fund (McCaw Hall Capital Reserve)
- <1% Unrestricted Cumulative Reserve Fund

2026 Seattle Center Priorities (highlights)

1. Advancing the Seattle Center Strategic Vision and 10-Year Action Plan (June 2025)
2. Seattle Center Festál – annual season of 25 cultural festivals kicked off with Tét on February 14
3. Seattle/King County Clinic – April 23-26
4. FIFA World Cup fan activities – June/July
5. Waterfront Park – first year of full park operations (park completed in late 2025)
6. Memorial Stadium construction – ongoing; opening anticipated Q3 2027





**CONNECT
AT THE
CENTER**



Legislation Text

File #: Inf 2836, **Version:** 1

Transportation Funding Task Force Update



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Transportation Revenue Task Force

CALVIN CHOW, ANALYST

STEPS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 19, 2026

Origin with 2024 Transportation Levy Proposal

- Mayor Harrell proposed a **Financial Task Force** together with his proposal for the Transportation Levy renewal, to consider how levy funding integrates into a long-term transportation funding strategy.
- SDOT presented this [proposal](#) to the Select Committee on 2024 Transportation Levy, on June 4, 2024. The **Financial Task Force** would:
 - Provide a public forum for community and stakeholders to build consensus on transportation funding needs, and
 - Make policy and funding recommendations to the Mayor and Council.
- Current and potential transportation revenue sources available to the City include:
 - Property tax
 - Sales tax
 - Vehicle excise tax
 - Commercial parking tax
 - Transportation impact fees
 - Tolls/congestion pricing
 - Local improvement districts
 - General Fund revenues

Companion Resolution to Levy Proposal

- The Council endorsed the formation of the **Transportation Funding Task Force** in [Resolution 32137](#), Section 2.G. This was companion legislation to Ordinance 127053 which put the 2024 Transportation Levy before the voters.
- The Resolution requested that the Task Force:
 - Include a diverse and representative membership.
 - Focus on practicable options that could be implemented quickly.
 - Provide final recommendations by the end of 2027.
- The Resolution highlighted sidewalks, bridges, and paving projects as areas of the transportation network with the greatest need.

Resolution to Establish Task Force

- Subsequently (September 2024), the Council adopted [Resolution 32145](#) to establish the Task Force. This resolution affirmed that if the Levy passed:
 - That Council would confirm Task Force appointments through a future resolution.
 - That SDOT would establish and lead an interdepartmental technical working group to support the Task Force.
 - A minimum scope review transportation asset management, assess revenue sources, and recommend funding and delivery strategies.
 - Appointment of members by June 1, 2025.
 - Final recommendations by December 31, 2027.

Current Status

- The 2024 Transportation Levy was approved by voters.
 - SDOT anticipated that of the \$5 million included in the levy for Durable Infrastructure Solutions, approximately \$1.5-2.0 million would be set aside for costs related to the Task Force.
 - The levy spending breakdown included specific direction to investigate transportation impact fees as a funding strategy for meeting sidewalk, bridge, and pavement needs.
- During the 2026 Budget deliberations, SDOT provided an updated schedule.
 - **Q2-Q3 2025:** Consultant solicitation
 - **Q4 2025:** Consultant contract finalized for phase 1 scope
 - **Q4 2025:** Workplan developed and finalized, alignment on approach and outcomes
 - **Q1 2026:** Recruitment and City Council appointment resolution
 - **Q1/Q2 2026:** Task force launch and update Mayor and City Council every six months
 - **Q4 2027:** Final recommendations

Questions?