

Overview of Facilities and Programs

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is responsible for maintaining, upgrading, and monitoring the use of the City's system of streets, bridges, retaining walls, seawalls, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic control devices. Seattle's transportation system includes 1,534 lane-miles of arterial streets and 2,412 lane-miles of non-arterial streets. The system also includes 150 bridges, 561 retaining walls, 479 stairways, and 1,000 signalized intersections in the public right-of-way that SDOT is responsible for inspecting and maintaining.

SDOT's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) outlines the Department's plan for maintaining, improving, and adding to this extensive infrastructure. A large portion of this work is funded by the Bridging the Gap transportation funding package. Other major funding sources include the City's General and Cumulative Reserve Subfunds, state gas tax revenues, federal and state grants, and partnerships with private organizations and other public agencies. SDOT's \$237 million capital budget is appropriated as part of its \$343 million 2009 proposed budget.

Highlights

- ◆ **Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project:** The 2009-2014 Proposed CIP continues the City's work to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall with a new transportation facility. In mid-2007, the City Council called for the development of an urban mobility plan to examine options for replacing the Viaduct. The City, King County, and the State of Washington agreed on a series of "early implementation" projects that do not depend on the ultimate design of the new transportation system on the central waterfront. The City continues to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on design and construction of components of the north seawall. The City's portions of all of these projects are funded in the 2009-2014 Proposed CIP using a combination of General Subfund money, bond proceeds, external grants, and utility funds for relocation of utility infrastructure.
- ◆ **Transportation Funding Package:** In August 2006, the Seattle City Council approved Bridging the Gap, a funding initiative proposed by the Mayor to repair and improve Seattle's streets, bike trails, sidewalks and bridges. The package includes a commercial parking tax and an employee hours tax which have been phased in gradually since July 2007. It also includes a property tax levy lid lift that was approved by Seattle voters in November 2006. The property tax measure is a nine-year levy, with the annual growth rate in levy revenue capped at one percent plus the value of new construction. Transportation capital funding from Bridging the Gap revenues and proceeds from Limited Tax General Obligation bonds to be repaid by Bridging the Gap revenues is \$127 million in 2009. A total of \$432 million is allocated from 2009-2014. Highlights of the Bridging the Gap program for 2009 include a plan to repave more than 24 lane miles of arterials, continued implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan, design and construction of three new trail segments, construction of more than 15 blocks of new sidewalks, further development of a pedestrian master plan, continued design and construction on the rehabilitation of six bridges and the seismic retrofit of four bridges, and construction of multiple neighborhood transportation improvements identified through the Neighborhood Street Fund process in 2007 and 2008.
- ◆ **Pedestrian Improvements and Safety:** Many of the City's pedestrian and safety improvements are supported by the Bridging the Gap Transportation Funding Package through programs such as the NSF/CRS Neighborhood Projects, the Safe Routes to School, Sidewalk Safety Repair, Pedestrian Countdown Signals, and School Zone Signage Improvements. This biennium, the CIP includes a specific focus on new sidewalk development. The 2009-2010 Proposed Budget includes \$5.7 million for the Sidewalk Development Program, an increase of 68 percent over the 2007-2008 budget.
- ◆ **The Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project:** The 2009-2010 Proposed Budget includes a finance plan to fully fund construction of the Burke-Gilman Trail "missing link" from 11th Avenue NW to the Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks. The final phases of Burke-Gilman Trail Extension project are supported by

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revenue from the 2007 King County Proposition 2 Trails and Open Space Levy, Bridging the Gap funds dedicated to bike and trail improvements, and anticipated grant funding. The City will debt finance \$4.3 million from these sources to accelerate construction in 2009 and 2010. Additionally, funds for new multi-purpose trail construction are directed to the Cheshiahud Lake Union Trail Project and the Chief Sealth Trail.

- ◆ **Spokane Street Viaduct:** This project, a major component of Bridging the Gap, builds a new structure that will be parallel and connected to the existing one, which will widen the existing viaduct by about 41 feet. The project also includes design and construction of an eastbound Fourth Avenue off-ramp. This project is scheduled to be completed in advance of the major traffic disruption anticipated during the Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement project.
- ◆ **King Street Station Multimodal Terminal:** In 2009, construction work continues on the King Street Station. The Station will be remodeled and transformed into a transportation hub connecting express bus, commuter train, and light rail service. The City expects to partner with the Washington State Department of Transportation to complete the restoration of the building so that it complies with the City's Sustainable Building Policy using a combination of State, Federal, Sound Transit, and Bridging the Gap funds. The first phase of the project is expected to be completed in 2012. A funding plan for Phase II is in development.
- ◆ **Greenwood Avenue North:** This project will provide pedestrian safety, transit speed and reliability, signal, lighting and drainage improvements. Construction is scheduled to be completed by 2010.
- ◆ **Mercer Corridor:** This project, a major component of Bridging the Gap, implements a comprehensive package of transportation improvements in the Mercer Corridor in South Lake Union. Improvements include, but are not limited to a widened two-way Mercer Street, improved pedestrian safety and access to Lake Union Park, and enhanced neighborhood circulation for all modes. The project aims to use existing street capacity more efficiently and enhance all modes of travel, including pedestrian mobility. It is a centerpiece for the revitalization of the South Lake Union neighborhood, which is expected to accommodate as many as 20,000 new jobs and 8,000 to 10,000 new households in the next 20 years, in addition to the new Lake Union Park. This project is scheduled to be completed in advance of the major traffic disruption anticipated during the Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement project.
- ◆ **Arterial Major Maintenance and Other Paving Projects:** SDOT's 2009-2014 Proposed CIP provides a total of \$39 million for the Arterial Major Maintenance and Arterial Asphalt & Concrete Programs. These ongoing programs rehabilitate and resurface asphalt and concrete arterial streets to preserve and extend the life of street surfaces. In mid-year 2008, the Arterial Asphalt & Concrete Program was accelerated, through an interfund loan per ordinance 122641, to provide paving in the corridors leading to and passing through downtown in anticipation of the Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project construction impacts. The 2009-2010 Proposed Budget further accelerates this program by providing an additional \$5 million towards paving from Bridging the Gap revenue. The revised plan paves 24 lane-miles of arterial streets in 2009.
- ◆ **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS):** The CIP contains four projects that encompass a citywide intelligent transportation system: 15th Avenue W/ Elliott Ave W Street Improvements, Alaskan Way Viaduct Intelligent Transportation System, Duwamish Intelligent Transportation Systems, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan Implementation. These projects provide tools to reduce traffic congestion such as Dynamic Message Signs, traffic signal interconnections, travel time measuring devices, and traffic cameras. The projects leverage local dollars with a significant amount of State, federal and County funding.

Project Selection Process

The City tries to balance three goals in making infrastructure capital investments:

- ◆ Rehabilitation of existing facilities to avoid the higher costs of deferred maintenance;
- ◆ Increase in the capacity of existing facilities to meet growing demand; and
- ◆ Development of new facilities to provide additional services.

SDOT prioritizes its projects to prepare recommendations on those to include in the budget, the CIP, and the grant development process. The process includes four steps.

Step 1: Identification of Transportation Needs

This step is an ongoing process during which projects for future funding are identified. These needs are developed from a number of sources (not listed in any priority order):

- Ongoing operations and maintenance programs
- Backlog of projects
- Projects in current CIP
- Transportation Strategic Plan
- Projects from SDOT planning
- Neighborhood plans and citizen requests
- Coordination with partner agencies

Step 2: Identification of non-discretionary programs and projects.

This step identifies non-discretionary programs and projects that must be budgeted for completion. Criteria for these items are as follows (not listed in any priority order):

- Mandated, with serious consequences for failing to meet the mandate (e.g., debt service, judgment and claims payments, Metro “Ride-Free Zone” payment, federal or state law mandates)
- Essential for the Department to function on a daily basis (e.g., accounting, payroll, human resources, facility rental, vehicles and equipment)
- Reimbursable services to other City departments or outside agencies (e.g., street use permitting, repairing utility cuts)
- Restricted funding services (e.g., support for Sound Transit, King County Metro, Alaskan Way Viaduct)
- Services that generate revenue for General Subfund (e.g., parking)
- Currently in construction (stopping these projects would be more costly than completing them)
- Urgent safety or emergency need (e.g., landslide, sinkhole)

Step 3: Prioritization of Discretionary Projects

The projects remaining after Step 2 are then ranked based on a 100 point scoring system. This prioritization process evaluates each project based on its merits. Following are the criteria applied to this evaluation (not listed in any priority order):

- Safety
- Preservation and maintenance of infrastructure
- Cost effectiveness or cost avoidance
- Mobility improvement
- Economic development
- Comprehensive Plan/Urban Village land use strategy
- Improving the environment

Step 4: Ordering Projects for Implementation

Once projects have been grouped into priority categories, they are evaluated to determine their readiness for funding and implementation. For example, even though a project may be a high priority, other circumstances may determine that the project is not ready for funding and implementation. Four criteria are used to make this determination (not listed in any priority order):

- Funding availability
- Interagency coordination
- Geographic balance
- Constituent balance

SDOT staff evaluate the results of steps 3 and 4 together to identify projects for which funding will be sought through grants, appropriations or other sources. Funded projects are incorporated into the CIP.

Anticipated Operating Expenses Associated with Capital Facilities Projects

In some projects, the Department has identified operations and maintenance costs at zero, or has not calculated a number (N/C). In these cases, the cost impacts of the project are either insignificant or are offset by cost savings realized by other projects. Projects that do identify operations and maintenance costs, such as the Burke-Gilman Trail Extension and Lake Union Ship Canal Trail projects have the costs built into the Department's operating budget.

Executive Provisos in the CIP

None of the money appropriated for 2009 for the Seattle Department of Transportation's Major Projects Budget Control Level can be spent to pay for construction for the Mercer Corridor Project, Project ID: TC365500, until authorized by ordinance. It is anticipated that such authority will not be granted until the Executive has provided the information outlined in Section 4 of Ordinance 122686 and City Council has had the opportunity to evaluate the Executive's progress toward securing grants and private participation.