

Seattle Department of Transportation  
Grant Report  
2013 Year End



**Historic District Alleys**

**\$851,000 for rebuilds and beautification**



**Puget Sound Bike Share**

**\$1,000,000 for stations near South Lake Union**



**Safe Routes to School**

**\$1,437,000 for street improvements and education**



**Delridge Cycle Track**

**\$357,000 for cycling facilities**



**Urban Forestry**

**\$17,000 for community landscaping**



**23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

**\$4,000,000 for bus trolley systems**

## Overview

In 2013, SDOT received 14 grant awards valued at just over \$10 million. Major awards include \$4 million for transit improvements on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, \$1 million for the launch of Puget Sound Bike Share, and over \$1 million in combined awards for school safety. The full award list, as usual, covers almost every type of SDOT project: street maintenance, protected bicycle lanes, pedestrian safety, transit, school zones, urban forestry, historic district renovations, and more.

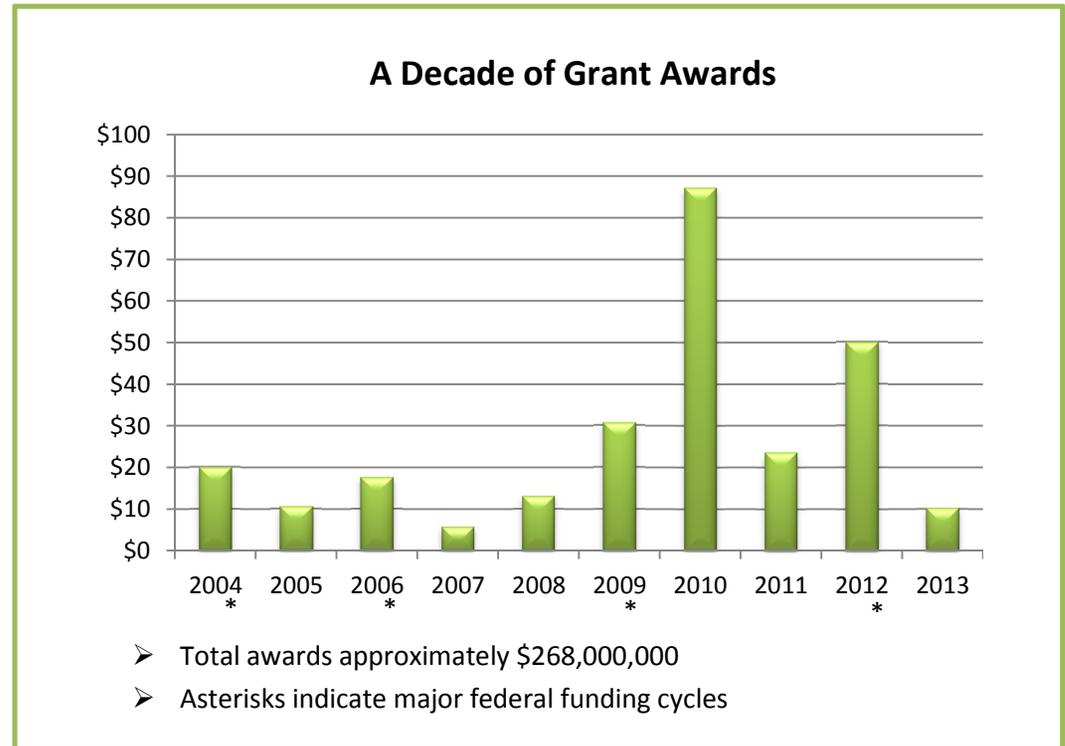
The \$10 million figure is a substantial decrease from the 2009 to 2012 era, where SDOT's grant program saw a number of exceptionally strong years. Many grantors offered small funding programs this year, and selection was often more competitive than ever. While SDOT continued submitting its usual number of applications (23), and also maintained its usual success rate (65%), award amounts were substantially smaller than recent years.

The period between 2009 and 2012 had been surprisingly strong for SDOT's grant program, as new economic stimulus programs offered large awards, and earmarks were replaced with discretionary grant programs. Annual grant revenues during this period were in the \$20 million to \$80 million range, while prior normal grant years had been in the \$10 million to \$20 million range.

The amount of grant awards received in 2013 is consistent with annual amounts prior to 2009. Before the recession, grant revenue was normally around \$10 million when the federal government was having an "off-year" in its bi-annual funding cycle (no STP, CMAQ, FTA, WSDOT safety, or WSDOT transit programs). In the years when these competitions occurred, \$20 million revenues would have been more typical. Specifically, the last three off-years before the recession brought grant revenue of \$11 million, \$6 million, and \$13 million.

## Changing Grant World

The past year has seen the environment for transportation grants continue to change. The current federal funding bill for transportation – MAP-21 – continued to increase the emphasis on project delivery, timely obligation of funds, and performance measures. A stronger emphasis on accountability is good overall for state and federal transportation programs, but increases the level of risk for SDOT and the City when using grant funds.



Changes at the state and federal level have resulted in increased levels of oversight and commitment to carrying through on projects for SDOT when using federal grant funds. A premium is being placed in competitions for projects that are ready-to-go and that have complete funding plans, requiring earlier decisions by City elected officials about moving forward with projects. Timelines and milestones set in early project and grant development are increasingly being looked at by funding agencies as commitments. Stricter rules regarding the timing of local obligation of grant funds decrease the ability of agencies to address unforeseen issues during project implementation, such as lawsuits or extended negotiations, without losing grants.

Political stalemates at both the state and federal levels over transportation funding have also created significant doubt from year-to-year for grant development staff. MAP-21 was only a two-year bill and it did not address long-term issues with the Highway Trust Fund, which is based on the federal gas tax. The bill also eliminated most discretionary grant programs, which Seattle did very well in between 2009 and 2012, putting more reliance on distribution of funds by formula to state DOTs. While MAP-21 increased the size of the National Highway System (NHS) by adding local primary arterial streets to the system, states were not required to distribute system maintenance funding to local jurisdictions. This results in an unfunded mandate due to the requirement that local jurisdictions meet new federally-mandated performance standards for the NHS. Delays in passing appropriations bills each year in Congress has also resulted in uncertainty about funding and caused delays for local agencies in moving projects forward through Federal approval processes. At the state level, dispute over whether to pass a transportation funding measure causes concern over the future of grant programs for local agencies.

One unexpected development during 2013 was that WSDOT and PSRC required local agencies to sponsor grant requests by non-governmental/transportation organizations for federal funds. In the recent past they had let these organizations apply directly and execute grant agreements. This requirement resulted in SDOT needing to sponsor grant requests it had only planned to support, leading to more responsibility and administrative burden for the department. These types of projects can be a positive for SDOT, fostering good relations with partners, but they also compete with SDOT's priorities.

## Looking Ahead

The forecast is mixed, with good news for the short term but a much less predictable outlook for the long range. A clustering of major programs this spring offers much opportunity for 2014. These programs will distribute fairly large sums, and together they could once again bring higher awards more similar to the recession years. Congress's continued ban on earmarks provides the opportunity for funds to be available for discretionary grant programs at the national level. Seattle competes very well in these programs. Quick passage of a federal budget and appropriations bills for 2014 increases funding certainty in the short-term.

However, the anticipated strength of 2014 may be a one-time coincidence. Many of these grant programs are relying heavily on the federal government's general fund, which is being used now to supplement gas taxes and the other usual transportation-related revenues. The lack of a transportation budget agreement and continued weakness of gas tax revenues at the state level causes uncertainty for state grant programs. Analysts generally agree that the transportation funding situation is worsening at both the federal and state levels and now has become unsustainable. Very soon, new sources of revenue will be required if state or federal agencies are to maintain their historic spending levels on local projects.

## Grants Awarded Funding - 2013

Fund Source	Eligible Types	Project	Award	Type	Local Match	Comments
Puget Sound Regional Council, Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program	Capital projects to reduce air pollution	Puget Sound Bike Share Launch	\$ 1,000,000	Capital	Private	Awarded to contingency list project from 2012 competitive process.
WSDOT, Quick Response Safety Program	Street improvements to enhance traffic safety	Citywide Stop and Yield Controlled Intersection Improvement	\$ 1,000,000	Capital	BTG	Original request was \$2,227,000.
Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Traffic Safety Program	Street improvements, educational programs, other programs to enhance traffic safety	Pedestrian Safety Study	\$ 95,000	Special Programs	BTG	Original request was \$125,000.
Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Flashing Beacons Program	Flashing beacons and signage in school zones	Nine elementary and middle schools with documented speeding concerns	\$ 67,500	Capital	BTG	Original application was later split into nine separate submittals based on grantor's request.
WSDOT, Regional Mobility Program	Transit	23 <sup>rd</sup> Ave	\$ 4,000,000	Capital	BTG/grants	
WSDOT, Safe Routes to School Program	Street improvements and educational programs to enhance safety in school zones	Wedgwood, Mercer, Greenwood, and South Shore schools	\$ 840,000	Capital and Special Programs	BTG	
WSDOT, Pedestrian/Bicycle Program	Non-motorized facilities	Delridge Cycle Track	\$ 357,000	Capital	BTG	
WSDOT, Safe Routes to School Program	Street improvements and educational programs to enhance safety in school zones	Beacon Hill Neighborhood Greenways Go to School	\$ 597,000	Capital / O&M	Safety programs	Delayed award – part of original request was funded in a previous award.
Puget Sound Regional Council, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Non-motorized, historic assets, or environmental mitigation	Northgate Pedestrian / Bicycle Bridge	\$ 600,000	Capital	BTG / REET	Original request was \$3,000,000; grantor awarded only design funds.
Puget Sound Regional Council, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Non-motorized, historic assets, or environmental mitigation	Canton and Nord Alleys Repaving	\$ 851,000	O&M	NA	Partner agencies providing matching funds.

King Conservation District	Urban Forestry	Neighborhood Beautification Tool Trailer	\$ 17,300	O&M	Urban Forestry program	
Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), Urban Sidewalk Program	Urban Sidewalks	Greenwood Avenue Sidewalks	\$ 800,000	Capital	BTG - Transit and Neighborhood Street Fund programs	
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$10,224,800</b>			

## Grant Applications Submitted - 2013

Fund Source	Eligible Types	Project	Request	Type	Local Match	Comments
WSDOT, Quick Response Safety Program	Street improvements to enhance traffic safety	Roxhill Elementary School Walk Route	\$ 75,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
WSDOT, Quick Response Safety Program	Street improvements to enhance traffic safety	Pedestrian/Streetlight District	\$ 3,500,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
WSDOT, Quick Response Safety Program	Street improvements to enhance traffic safety	South Ballard Corridor Safety Improvements	\$ 750,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
WSDOT, Quick Response Safety Program	Street improvements to enhance traffic safety	Citywide Stop and Yield Controlled Intersection Improvement	\$ 2,227,000	Capital	BTG	Awarded \$1,000,000
Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC), Traffic Safety Program	Street improvements, educational programs, other programs to enhance traffic safety	Pedestrian Safety Study	\$ 125,000	Capital	Not required	Awarded \$95,000
Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Flashing Beacons Program	Flashing beacons and signage in school zones	Affects nine schools with documented speeding concerns (Assumption - St. Bridget, Denny, Gatewood, Hawthorne, McDonald, Montlake, Rainier View, Whitman, and STEM at Boren)	\$ 67,500	Capital	BTG	Funds awarded for all nine locations, \$67,500 total
King Conservation District	Urban forestry	Neighborhood Beautification Tool Trailer	\$ 17,300	O&M	BTG	Received full award
TIB Urban Arterial Program	Safety, mobility, preservation, or growth and development	23 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue East	\$ 5,000,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
TIB Urban Arterial Program	Safety, mobility,	Union Street / Seneca Street	\$ 5,000,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded

	preservation, or growth and development					
TIB Urban Arterial Program	Safety, mobility, preservation, or growth and development	Lake City Way and 95 <sup>th</sup> Street Intersection	\$ 663,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
TIB Urban Sidewalk Program	Sidewalks	Greenwood Avenue North (92 <sup>nd</sup> to 97 <sup>th</sup> )	\$ 400,000	Capital	BTG	Received full award
TIB Urban Sidewalk Program	Sidewalks	Greenwood Avenue North (97 <sup>th</sup> to 105 <sup>th</sup> )	\$ 400,000	Capital	BTG	Received full award
TAP	Non-motorized, historic assets, or environmental mitigation	Northgate Pedestrian / Bicycle Bridge	\$ 3,000,000	Capital	BTG/REET	Received partial award of \$600,000
TAP	Non-motorized, historic assets, or environmental mitigation	Historic District Curb Ramps	\$ 2,000,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
TAP	Non-motorized, historic assets, or environmental mitigation	7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Cycle Track	\$ 1,000,000	Capital	NA	Not awarded
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 24,224,800</b>			

## Upcoming Grant Programs - 2014

Fund Source	Eligible Types	Applications Due	Comments
WTSC Traffic Safety	Street improvements, educational programs, other programs to enhance traffic safety	February	
City Safety	Roadway safety improvements	March	Program is undergoing revisions in 2014.
Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB)	Operational improvements to major freight routes	March	Grants may only fund construction expenses.
Community Forestry Assistance	Community Forestry	March	
Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ)	Mobility and air quality improvements (with sub-programs for street maintenance and non-motorized projects)	March	Typically the largest distribution of federal funds, this program will distribute three years of funding valued at over \$200 million. Awards usually range from \$1 million to \$10 million.
Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)	Major projects related to job growth and economic stimulus	May	New federal budget provides 20% increase in funds over 2013.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program	Recreational Trails	May	
Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee (BRAC)	Bridge maintenance, repair, or replacement	May	Approximately \$70 to \$90 million is available, with typical awards between \$1 million and \$10 million.
Safe Routes to School	Street improvements and educational programs to enhance safety in school zones	May	
Bicycle / Pedestrian Program	Non-motorized facilities	May	
Transportation Improvement Board, Urban Arterial Program	Major capital projects to improve safety, mobility, pavement condition, or economic development	August	Awards are typically capped at \$5 million for large projects, with average awards in the \$2 million range.
Transportation Improvement Board, Urban Sidewalk Program	Improve pedestrian safety by eliminating gaps in the sidewalk system	August	Typically awards small grants, less than \$1 million.
Department of Ecology	Stormwater drainage and environmental projects	October	The Department of Ecology plans to open several grant programs concurrently in 2014.
State Regional Mobility Grant (RMG)	Transit system upgrades	October	
Federal Transit Administration, Small Starts Program	Establishing new or expanded transit services	Flexible	Applicants work through a multi-phase scoping and planning process with FTA before applying for funds.
Federal Transit Administration, Transit Oriented Development Pilot Program	Transit oriented development	Unknown	