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*The Seattle Transit Advisory Board shall **advise** the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the City **on matters related to transit** and the possible and actual impact of actions by the City upon all forms of public transportation.*

*The Board shall be provided the opportunity to comment and make recommendations on City policies, plans, and projects as they may relate to **transit capital improvements, transit mobility, and transit operations** throughout the City...*

*The Board shall help facilitate City policies, plans, and projects that support local and region-wide transit mobility efforts, to help **ensure a functioning and coordinated transit system** throughout the City and region.*

*The Board shall function as the **public oversight committee of revenues collected under Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD) Proposition 1**, as described in Resolution 12 of the STBD...*

The Board shall make an annual report to the City Council on the status of its work program and the achievement of its goals.

**City Council Resolution
31572**

Date: December 9, 2019

To: The Honorable Mayor Jenny Durkan and Seattle City Council

Subject: Seattle Transportation Benefit District Year 4 Annual Report

Dear Mayor Durkan and City Council Members,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board has reviewed the Seattle Transit Benefit District (STBD) Year 4 Performance Report. We are pleased with the progress that the Seattle Department of Transportation has made in reaching the goals approved in the 2014 Seattle Transportation Benefit District Proposition 1. The voter approved funds from STBD have provided critical transit opportunities for people of all ages and abilities throughout City. The funds have also been critical in improving transit speed, reliability and rider experience for transit users.

Since the material change in scope approved last year, our enthusiasm for which we communicated in our last report, SDOT has taken the opportunity to increase transit service hours in the northern and southern reaches of the city. These areas have higher proportions of historically marginalized populations, and are areas which were harder for the STBD to support, as their primary routes extended farther outside the city. We are excited these residents will better see the benefits of the TBD.

With the additional capital investment authority from the scope change, the city has also begun with capital improvements. This has been a difficult program to spin up, with a tight deadline for completion and a dearth of shovel-ready projects and available construction resources. Many of the most noticeable improvements in transit priority have thus far been focused downtown, to mediate the Seattle Squeeze. We would encourage that this program move its focus to outlying neighborhoods, particularly along Route 7, though we know the STBD's current uncertain funding situation may put such plans on hold.

The TBD has taken steps to reach out to disadvantaged populations with the ORCA Opportunity program, especially in its Seattle Housing Authority-partnered pilot program. We hope this program can continue to connect income-qualified individuals with career and other resources. This kind of investment fosters growth and independence for participants, and along with its sister program aimed at public high school students exposes them to public transit as they may not have had an opportunity to experience it before.

Seattle's rapid growth has accelerated demand for transit and other non-motorized transportation options. Increasing vehicular emissions are harming the health of our residents and increased traffic is threatening personal safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and drivers. There just isn't room on our streets for additional vehicles. The prosperity of our City will suffer if we don't provide our citizens a progressive and inclusive transit system. Seattle falls behind its global peer cities in mass and rapid transit. Now with the passage of the November 2019 Washington Initiative 976, transit is even more threatened. Legal actions have put this Initiative in limbo with the courts left to decide on its future. If the Initiative does go into effect, it will hit people with financial and physical mobility issues the hardest. This is unacceptable. If the City's legal challenges are unsuccessful, the Transit Advisory Board strongly recommends using a Race and Social Justice Initiative lens to advise program cuts, in order to minimize the harm to vulnerable populations, to the extent possible.

Beyond the immediate funding crisis precipitated by I976, we have reached the point where a discussion of an STBD renewal is urgent. Though the original STBD proposition has made critical improvements in the lives of Seattle residents, we fear a lack of sufficient marketing has left voters unaware that these achievements are due to the transportation benefit district. Seattle has less than a year to craft an STBD 2.0 to continue, and make improvements upon, the successes of the last five years. In addition to possible changes to the spending plan of the STBD, we encourage the City to continue to lobby for more equitable revenue streams.

We encourage you and the City Council Members to be prepared with ideas of alternative funding sources to ensure our City has the transit system it deserves. We cannot afford to lose critical funding for transit. It is the future of our City's vitality and the cornerstone for equitable opportunities for all.

Respectfully submitted,

Seattle Transit Advisory Board