

Seattle Transportation Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday, August 12, 5-7pm

Location: In-person at Seattle City Hall – Bertha Knight Landes Room.

Members Present:

- Lisa Bogardus
- Jack Brand
- Lynda Firey-Oldroyd
- Alex Hudson
- Harrison Jerome
- Chase Kitchen
- Steven Pumphrey
- Kaid Ni Ray-Tipton
- Nafiso Samatar
- Jack Whisner
- Geri Poor
- Zach Burton
- Lucy Sloman
- Wes Mills
- Tyler Vasquez
- Rafi Ronquillo
- City Councilmember Rob Saka
- Ian Griswold, City Councilmember Rob Saka's Office
- Saroja Reddy, City Budget Office Director delegate

Members Absent: None

Guests:

- **SDOT:** Serena Lehman, Megan Hoyt, Kalen Carney, Bill LaBorde, Katie Olsen, Alex King, Joanna Hankamer, Darby DuComb, Chris Godwin, Dan Anderson
- **Mayor's Office:** Armand Shahbazian
- **Members of the public:** 2

MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 5:07 PM

Welcome & Public Comment

- Katie O.: Welcome, and thank you for being here. This is a time for any members of the public to give public comments if they wish.
 - No public comment given

Introduction

- Rafi R. introduced himself, and his motivation for serving on the LOC.

- New Guests (Armand S.) and SDOT Staff members (Dan A., Chris G., Darby D., Megan H., Joanna H.) introduced themselves and their roles.

Review of Last Meeting

- No questions from LOC members about the content presented at the last meeting.

SDOT Presentation on Levy Portfolio Management

- Serena Lehman, Dan Anderson, and Joanna Hankamer presented on how SDOT manages and plans for the \$1.55 billion Seattle Transportation Levy, focusing on project and program delivery processes.
- Alex H.: Can you define “spot”? What does paving spot improvement mean in terms of size of the project?
 - Serena L. Spot is SDOT nomenclature. Paving spots could be anything from a panel repair to a block of roadway. It would not be a big rebuild across a full corridor.
- Tyler V.: What is the role of the LOC during project definition, 0 – 30% design, and 30-100% design?
 - Dan A.: Engagement around big projects is a process. Start at a high altitude and get more into the fine grain details as you go through the process, but you continue to engage community throughout the process. Community members, neighborhood orgs, etc. can plug in at any point in the process. The beginning is always best, but there are opportunities throughout.
 - Katie O.: LOC has a unique role unlike our modal boards. Our modal boards often focus on the scope of specific projects, but the LOC focuses on are we delivering on our commitments to voters. The goal is to have the LOC focus on the information presented today to support your understanding of how we fulfill our commitment to voters and the goals outlined in the levy.
- Tyler V.: Does SDOT put out the bids for the design phase?
 - Joanna H.: Yes, SDOT has contracting staff. However, not all our design work is contracted out. Some projects are designed in-house by SDOT Staff.
- Tyler V.: Is there any overlap between the design consultants and the construction team? How does the handoff work?
 - Joanna H.: The SDOT project manager is engaged as early as possible, and they are the stewards of the process. During the design we have constructability reviews, with construction staff.
- Lucy S.: How do you coordinate with utilities and other departments about the projects they might have in those areas? How about non-city entities / private developers, state, federal government? How do you make sure a single neighborhood isn’t experiencing too many projects at the same time?
 - Joanna H.: The aim is to disrupt a neighborhood as few times as possible and to be the most efficient with public dollars. We send around 30/60/90 design reviews to key public and private partners to enhance coordination and identify opportunities to align work.
- Alex H.: This sounds like quite a lengthy process, with significant direct and indirect costs. What is the value to the public for the length of these processes?

- Joanna H. Everything is many times more expensive during construction when unanticipated changes, which is one reason why we spend a lot more time on design. A lot of work that goes into the design is aimed at shortening construction and reducing risks through design – due to construction cost and disruption to community. The contract process is driven by state law.
- Alex H.: Some of the projects that people are most interested in seeing are about safety. Is there a fast tracking to this process related to public safety hazards?
 - Megan H.: This lengthy process is tied to our large projects, where a lot of our funding is going. But the bulk of our projects are very small and done by our crews and are done as add-ons to other work and can be done much more quickly.
 - Megan H.: Our Vision Zero program has an action plan, and they have a constant stream of information coming in right away and are aware of what can be done quickly in conjunction with big projects when opportunities arise.
- Jack W.: When mistakes are made by SDOT or the contractors, and the same contractor is used for the next project – what changes are made?
 - Joanna H.: Rapid Ride J and Rapid Ride G lines are being delivered by the same contractors and are federal projects. There were lessons learned that were applied to the J Line (e.g. early potholing to check for utilities).
 - Joanna H. explained SDOT's requirement to reward our contracts to the lowest qualified bidder, and how SDOT holds our contractors accountable on our projects.
- Jack B.: At given point how many projects are in flight at any one time?
 - Joanna H. Average construction starts are about 12 – 15 a year. In the last year of the last levy, we had over 30 starts. These are numbers for large contractor delivered projects.
 - In total we have typically 80-90 active capital projects at any given time.
 - Serena L.: Crew delivered projects can be more difficult to estimate since we have Operations and Maintenance and other projects – but we are delivering at over 100 locations per year.
 - Dan A.: From our engagement team's tracking, we have 120 active projects currently (including both contractor and crew delivered). These numbers will fluctuate over the next few years as we are currently ramping down projects from the last levy, at the same time we are ramping up the new levy projects.
- Kalen C. and Serena L. presented on how SDOT manages and plans for the \$1.55 billion Seattle Transportation Levy, focusing on managing revenues and spending.
- Alex H.: You mentioned that SDOT is statutorily required to bid out projects at \$150K and above. Where is the origin of that statute, and does that number change over time due to inflation?
 - Bill L.: This requirement is from the state and is in the Revised Code of Washington (RC). It was updated in 2023, but that adjustment has not yet been implemented. It is not automatically updated based on inflation but requires action by the state legislature.
- Jack W.: The City Council has talked about and requested hiring additional staff, additional crews, and ST3 planners. Has SDOT been able to hire the crews that we need for the work in 2025?

- Serena L.: Levy does not fund planners of ST3. We have started hiring some staff for this new levy. We are excited to see things start speeding up
- Jack W.: There is another city entity that works in your right of way – the Waterfront crew How do you work with them?
 - Serena L.: The Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects is a part of SDOT.
- Stephen P.: How do you decide when to report to the LOC on any given project?
 - Serena L.: This is a great question, that we will dig into more on this at future meetings. We expect to engage you on a wide variety of our projects both small and large.
- Serena L. presented on how we collect data and report on levy funded work, and our cycle of levy Delivery and Reporting.

Discussion on Transparency and Accountability

- Katie O.: Introduced the importance of ensuring transparency and accountability as one of the LOC's key functions and invited the LOC attendees to engage in a journaling and reflection activity on what transparency and accountability looks like to LOC members and how they would like to see it show up in the LOC. Key takeaways from this conversation include:
 - **Focus on Impact, Outcomes, and Policy Goals:** The LOC stressed the importance of conveying real-world impact of projects (e.g., reducing deaths/injuries) and ensuring alignment with broader city goals, such as sustainable transportation targets.
 - **Data and Storytelling:** Combining quantitative data with qualitative storytelling was encouraged to better communicate project benefits and impacts. Timely, accurate, and contextual data, along with more frequent dashboard updates, were suggested to track progress effectively.
 - **Clear Communication and Accessibility:** Clear communication about project plans, budgets, and delays was called for, with a focus on distinguishing what is within and outside SDOT's control. The LOC also encouraged being accountable to community by providing accessible information in diverse formats (visual and verbal) and proactive, honest updates.
 - **Project Selection and Prioritization:** Transparency in how SDOT selects and prioritizes projects was requested, along with concerns about ensuring investments reach areas that need them most
 - **LOC's Role and Expectations:** The LOC encouraged SDOT to provide tools for members to become informed participants and hold them accountable for active engagement. They also hoped SDOT would address not just specific questions but the broader intent behind them.

Questions, Wrap Up, and Look-Ahead to Next Meetings/Closing

- Katie O.: Provided an overview of upcoming meetings.

Adjourn: 7:00 PM

Action items

Action items below capture tasks from previous meetings and status.

Action	Responsibility	Status
Provide dictionary of common SDOT acronyms to LOC.	SDOT	Complete
Who owns the other 600,000 trees in ROW?	SDOT	600,000 other trees in the right-of-way would be owned by adjacent property owners and would be considered privately maintained trees. city maintains trees that we have planted, and trees planted by property owners or naturally occurring trees are the maintenance responsibility of the adjacent property owner.
Can you send us the SDOT Org Chart?	SDOT	Complete