



**TAB Members:**

Priyadharshini Balan  
Deborah Barnard  
Ashwin Bhumbala  
Zachary Burton  
Dana Coppernoll-Houston  
Art Kuniyuki  
Sidney Orr  
Sandro Pani  
Carolyn Tillinger  
Daniel Wolpert

*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 taken 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**

**TAB Vision Statement:** *We envision a Seattle with frequent, reliable, safe, inclusive, accessible, and affordable public transit.*

**City of Seattle  
Seattle Transit Advisory Board**

June 4, 2026

**To:** Seattle City Councilmembers, Mayor Katie Wilson

**Re:** Seattle Transit Measure Renewal Proposal Feedback

Seattle City Councilmembers and Mayor Katie Wilson,

As part of our duty to "function as the public oversight committee" for funds under the current Seattle Transit Measure (STM), the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) is writing to share our feedback on the Mayor's final proposal for an STM successor.

In March of this year, the TAB outlined its priorities for the STM successor. We stated that the successor should :

- **Focus primarily on increasing bus service.** Spending a majority of funds directly on transit service was the STM and STBD's strength. It provided a meaningful, immediate impact to taxpayers. With Metro coming out of a long-running operator shortage, the renewal should have the same focus, take advantage, and deliver more service. To this end we also believe **an even larger percentage of funds (at least 60%) should be spent directly on transit service** to discourage potential future material scope changes and keep spending in line with voter intent.
- **Improve financial accessibility to that improved transit (such as through the Transportation Access Programs).**
- **Keep any capital projects focused on improving transit performance** to ensure every dollar spent on service goes even farther.
- **Ensure Streetcar operations continue** to keep an essential transit option alive while encouraging a re-examination of the Culture Connector project.
- **Increase the sales tax levied from the current rate of 0.15% to 0.30% over a ten (10) year period** in order to both keep up with inflation and meaningfully expand transit service.

The TAB is thus now thrilled with the Mayor's proposal. **We wholeheartedly endorse this proposal**, which has a great deal of alignment with our priorities. We laud its focus on ...

- ...improving transit service
- ...meeting Frequent Transit Network (FTN) goals
- ...expanding transit access through TAP
- ...and keeping essential transit connections such as the Streetcar open.

With this proposal, we see every dollar collected spent as optimally as possible, with the vast majority going towards immediate, visible, effective changes in transit service. We believe this proposal is exactly what Seattle needs and that it will pass at the ballot.

### **INCREASING THE SALES TAX RATE:**

To dive into some specifics, we agree with the approach to increase the sales tax rate to the **maximum allowable rate of 0.30%** in order to not only keep up with rising costs, but also make the large investment in transit service that Seattle needs. For the first time since the pandemic, King County Metro has overcome its operator shortage and stands ready to deliver the service that Seattle desires. **We should take advantage and heavily invest, transforming the Frequent Transit Network (FTN) from an aspiration to reality.**

The TAB acknowledges that a sales tax is a regressive form of taxation. However, there is nothing more regressive than cutting back on service. If it is a choice between a regressive tax and reduced service, the former must be chosen. With the cost of owning, storing, and fueling a car outstripping inflation, the TAB believes the investments this measure makes in making transit a more viable and affordable transportation mode will pay for themselves.

### **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

This is why we believe that this measure should be focused on providing immediate returns for taxpayers by primarily funding increased transit service. Any dollar diverted for other uses is a dollar not spent on transit service.

With the Seattle Transportation Levy passing two years ago, we have another funding source for infrastructure projects already available. We believe spending **STM funds primarily on bus service...**

- ...is a much more effective use of funds
- ...provides a more immediate, visible return to taxpayers
- ...and distinguishes this measure from the Transportation Levy which is sure to be present in taxpayers' minds.

Distinguishing these two measures in intent and delivery is paramount to ensure it passes. We urge Council to keep this in mind while developing amendments. Just as with the previous STM, we are happy to see the Mayor's proposal have a smaller amount of funding available for capital projects. Again, **we believe the wisest approach is to focus on projects that increase bus speed through**

**reserved lanes and signal prioritization, increasing how many bus trips we get for each operator hour we purchase.** We can increase transit performance, and get more bang for our buck.

**SEATTLE STREETCAR:**

We are also glad to see that funding for the Streetcar is included as both lines provide essential connections to thousands of riders across the city. We **highly encourage the City to reopen the Culture Connector project in order to best leverage this continued investment.** Bringing these two lines together is an additional cost but it is one worth making as it will maximize the effectiveness of the system, bringing a greater return to every dollar invested in Streetcar service over the years.

We've appreciated working with the Mayor's office, SDOT, and meeting with individual councilmembers to learn from each party and share our vision for what the next STM should be. We look forward to learning more about Council's priorities and will be writing in the near future to share our feedback on proposed amendments.

***Let's work together to make this successor the truly landmark, life-changing piece of legislation that it can be.***

Sincerely yours,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB)