



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

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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 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**

City of Seattle
Seattle Transit Advisory Board

June 22, 2022

Seattle City Council
council@seattle.gov
600 Fourth Avenue
2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmembers,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB) is submitting its annual review of the Seattle Transit Measure (STM) for the period of July 2020 to December 2021.

One of the TAB's duties is to "*function as the public oversight committee of revenues collected under Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD) Proposition 1*" - now known as the **Seattle Transit Measure (STM)**. The Board takes this responsibility very seriously and is pleased to provide our comments below.

The TAB supports the progress made by the STM team to provide a Frequent Transit Network, while balancing the financial realities that have occurred post-COVID-19 in ridership levels, driver availability, and decreases in farebox revenues. Of the average \$50M available for expenses, the current 63% allocated to King County Metro Transit Service is reasonable, and we support the targeted bus routes being funded and the overall progress completed.

In the future, and with the new Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) guiding the STM, we hope that monies can be increased to the Emerging Mobility Network, Transportation Access Program, Capital Projects, Spot Improvements, and Planning & Analysis areas, as they become available, and fit SDOT's equity and social justice model for the community.

But, the TAB also acknowledges that changes in revenue streams are unpredictable, and if there is a need to cut back on service hours, we would like those decisions to be guided by the same equity approach as increasing them.

The TAB strongly supports the STM model of increasing funding for Night Owl and off-peak service, or for unexpected interruptions, like the West Seattle Bridge closure and the effect on routes that service

that area, as well as creating ridership programs like “Flip Your Trip” to encourage current car drivers to try public transportation.

The West Seattle Bridge example falls under the Emerging Mobility Needs category, which made up 12% of expenditures as presented in the report, and it is available for use on additional transit service, capital improvements, transit demand activities (like the West Seattle Bridge closure), and mobility needs, like the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a very flexible expenditure, and can be used as needed. The TAB supports having the flexibility to quickly fund needs, but also needs to provide oversight to monitor where and how the funds are being spent.

The STM highlights their progress with SDOT’s Transportation Access Plan (TAP), which was 15% of their expenses, and by all measures, the TAB highly encourages this investment to continue and be expanded, based on the current results, to meet or exceed the TAP’s Mission and Vision statements. Increasing ridership, post-COVID, is essential, and tapping the youth market with ORCA Opportunity – Youth, college attendees with ORCA Opportunity – Promise, SHA residents with ORCA Opportunity – SHA, and the Recovery Card Program to workers in the CID and Pioneer Square area, are just a few examples of how successful these programs are. The results speak for themselves, and the TAB fully supports these expenditures in the future.

We have mentioned the racial and social justice need in transit planning, and the STM is addressing this with their Low-Income Access to Transit programming, featuring Youth Ambassadors, Senior Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP) Program, and the Downtown Circulator. Encouraging our youth to be the next generation of transit users is essential, and having them become community ambassadors is a win-win opportunity. The RRFP Program has collaborated with community organizations of diverse background throughout the area and offered field trips and educational experiences that an ORCA card can tap into. We encourage the STM funding of this program in 2022. Finally, the Circulator program, by assisting ADA riders who may not easily access normal transit routes, in the Downtown corridor, is a great asset to an overlooked community.

Capital Projects made up 6% of the STM expenditures, with funding limited by legislation. Two areas highlighted, Transit Spot Improvements and Priority Bus Lanes, have resulted in upgrades, enhancements, and improved access for transit riders in targeted areas, along with three ongoing bus lane projects that will continue into 2024. These expenditures have resulted in visible and measurable results that the TAB will continue to monitor, with the STM team, and the overall STP, in the future, while assuring that communities are chosen following SDOT’s racial and social justice policies.

Finally, 4% of the funding is used in Planning and Analysis. The STM is funded by sales tax revenue, and while estimated at \$50M annually (but not exclusively) from 2020-2027, there are numerous variables currently and in the future that will impact revenue forecasts, and associated expenses. The TAB is charged with oversight for these expenses, and we thank the STM staff for continuing to work with the TAB and SDOT’s Transportation Equity Workgroup (TEW) when making plans for future programs and services for individuals and communities, in an equitable manner. The TAB hosts STM staff at its monthly meetings several times during the year, as a forum for discussions.

As a future benefit for stakeholders and the general public, many City agencies are making use of public dashboards for real time progress analysis, and we would advocate this for the STM metrics – Investment by Time Period, Frequent Transit Network Progress, The Move Seattle Transit Promise, for example.

The TAB would also suggest that the annual STM performance report be kept to its previous first quarter of the year issuance, which allows for better analysis of the information, and a longer response time.

Sincerely yours,
The Seattle Transit Advisory Board Members