



City of Seattle Seattle Transit Advisory Board

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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: February 3, 2020

To: Mayor Jenny Durkan and Seattle City Council

Subject: Seattle Transportation Benefit District Renewal Priorities

To the Honorable Mayor Durkan and Members of the Seattle City Council:

With Proposition 1 funding for the voter-approved Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD) expiring at the end of 2020, we, the members of the Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB), strongly urge you to find a solution that ensures the vital transit service and investments currently provided by the STBD continue. As you contemplate the best strategies for creating a successful future ballot measure, whether as a city or in collaboration with regional partners, we wanted to share our top priorities for the scope of that ballot measure.

Since convening over four years ago, the TAB has noted the strengths and limitations of the investment types allowed by the scope of the STBD. While the 2018 Material Change in Scope responded to some of our suggestions, there continue to be opportunities that we feel a successor measure to the STBD could take advantage of, while retaining the gains we have seen over the last five years. The TAB recommends the following elements of the STBD scope be continued or expanded, regardless of the jurisdiction or agency that chooses to go to ballot to preserve the critical transit investments Seattle residents have made over the last half decade:

- Maintain current Metro level of service and frequency investments.** Over the past five years, Seattle has provided more access to transit service throughout Seattle. 70% of households now have 10-minute access to 10-minute service, up from 25% in 2015. As our city and region continue to grow, we must continue to provide access to very frequent and reliable transit to reduce drive-alone trips and get people where they need to go.
- Prioritize funding ORCA Opportunity programs and ORCA LIFT card distribution, and seek new avenues to improve access to transit for youth and low-income households.** We strongly support the continued subsidy of ORCA cards for all Seattle Public High School students and we encourage the expansion of the subsidy of income-qualified Seattle Public middle school students to encompass all public middle school students. By eliminating the need to pay a fare, these programs improve these young people's access to economic opportunities while helping create the next generation of transit riders. Similarly, we encourage the expansion of the SHA

pilot to encompass residents living in other low-income properties and for SDOT to pursue other ways to improve access to and education about transportation options for low-income Seattle residents, including by finding new ways to distribute ORCA Lift cards to qualified residents.

- **Keep the ability to fund capital investments.** In the current era of constrained metro bus base capacity and increasingly congested roadways, speed and reliability improvements are a win-win situation. For passengers, they improve the passenger experience and make transit more competitive with driving alone. For the City, they allow us to stretch our service hours further. We suffer from a "missing middle" of transit investments. While there is dedicated funding for miles-long RapidRide corridors, and for short spot improvements like queue jumps, the basic bus lanes that would provide the most utility for our most congested neighborhoods do not have a clear funding source.
- **Purchase transit service from other transit agencies (e.g., Sound Transit).** It's critical that we be able to add service where people need it most, and with Sound Transit Link service covering more of the city, a partnership with them is increasingly important to equitably serve the city. We should expand our current service buying allowance and contract to let the City purchase Sound Transit light rail and express bus service (E.g., increase Link light rail frequencies for residents working non-traditional work hours or using transit to get to evening and weekend activities).
- **Expand funding partnership opportunities to enable more (private or non-profit) institutions to fund service.** We believe the city should expand the regional partnership program to allow for more potential partners to co-fund service. These public-private partnerships would provide institutions with an opportunity to improve service in the neighborhoods and corridors where they contribute large numbers of riders.
- **Expand regional partnership program to include the ability to share the cost of capital investments.** As with public-private partnerships for the funding of service, we believe that private for- and non-profit institutions should also have a clear pathway to funding transit improvements in their neighborhoods. We understand that transportation agencies can levy certain capital contribution requirements as a condition of land use or building permits, but we believe that it is important that local institutions continue to have clear avenues for capital contributions beyond initial permitting.

Each of these recommendations have clear benefits to residents of Seattle and the surrounding areas. We look forward to continuing a dialogue as a STBD successor measure is contemplated and ultimately placed on the ballot.

Regards,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board