

Overview of Facilities and Programs

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is responsible for maintaining, upgrading, and monitoring the use of the City's system of streets, bridges, retaining walls, seawalls, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic control devices. Seattle's transportation system includes 1,534 lane-miles of arterial streets and 2,412 lane-miles of non-arterial streets. The system also includes 150 bridges, 561 retaining walls, 479 stairways, and 1,000 signalized intersections in the public right-of-way that SDOT is responsible for inspecting and maintaining. Each year, the Department paves more than 26 asphalt arterial lane miles; repairs more than 6,600 feet of bridge and stair railings and more than 2,800 lane-feet of bridge decking; maintains or replaces more than 13,000 traffic signs; services 975 traffic signals; and raises and lowers the City's movable bridges more than 16,770 times.

SDOT's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) outlines the Department's plan for repairing, improving, and adding to this extensive infrastructure. SDOT's CIP is financed from a variety of revenue sources including the City's General and Cumulative Reserve Subfunds, state gas tax revenues, vehicle license registration fees (abolished under Initiative 776), federal and state grants, Public Works Trust Fund loans, partnerships with private organizations and other public agencies, and bond proceeds. SDOT's \$109.1 million capital budget is appropriated as part of its \$195.3 million operating budget.

Highlights

- ◆ **South Lake Union Street Car:** During 2006, SDOT will complete design and begin construction of a streetcar route serving downtown Seattle, the Denny Triangle, and the South Lake Union Urban Center. This project provides local transit service, connects to the regional transit system, encourages economic development, and helps create vibrant, livable neighborhoods.
- ◆ **Fremont Bridge Approaches and Electrical Major Maintenance:** SDOT received a \$20.5 million Federal Transportation Equity Act TEA-21 grant awarded by the Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee and two Public Works Trust Fund loans totaling \$11 million to replace the approaches, and electrical and mechanical systems that raise and lower the Fremont Bridge. Construction begins in 2005 and is scheduled to be substantially complete in 2008.
- ◆ **Bridge Way North and Fremont Circulation:** SDOT was awarded a \$2.8 million state Arterial Improvement Program (AIP) grant to implement traffic and pedestrian improvements in the Fremont area. These improvements help mitigate the impact that the construction of the Fremont Bridge Approaches project will have on the neighborhood and surrounding businesses.
- ◆ **Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Study:** In 2005, tunnel design continued and a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) was prepared. The DSEIS addresses how the project could be built (construction sequencing), transportation management options during construction, improvements to Aurora Avenue north of the Battery Street Tunnel, and the construction of Steinbrueck Park lid. The Emergency Closure Plan was enhanced should the Viaduct be forced to close before construction begins, and a study of options for reducing storm damage to the Seawall kicked-off. In 2006, the DSEIS will be released for public and agency comment; a construction approach selected; noise, traffic, economic and other project impact mitigation plans developed; utility relocation plans prepared; and the Environmental Impact Statement finalized for release in 2007.
- ◆ **Arterial Major Maintenance and Other Paving Projects:** SDOT's 2006 Adopted CIP includes a total of \$8.8 million budgeted for the Arterial Major Maintenance and Arterial Asphalt and Concrete Programs. These ongoing programs resurface asphalt and concrete arterial streets to prevent further deterioration of street surfaces. In 2006, 29 lane-miles will be resurfaced under the Arterial Asphalt and Concrete Program. One paving project will rehabilitate the 45th Street corridor, including segments of Stone Way and 15 Avenue

NE. A second project will rehabilitate California Avenue SW, including segments of Fauntleroy Avenue SW and Admiral Way. Four lane-miles will be rehabilitated as part of the Arterial Major Maintenance Program. The 29 lane-miles will be rehabilitated as part of other, multi-objective transportation capital projects. The major projects with significant pavement rehabilitation are S Jackson Street, 35 Avenue NE (including segments of NE 65 Street and NE 75 Street), Phinney Avenue N, Bridge Way and SR 519. The total projected new arterial paving in 2006 is 62 12-foot-wide lane-miles.

Project Selection Process

In making capital investments in its infrastructure, the City tries to balance three goals:

- ◆ Rehabilitation of existing facilities to avoid the higher costs of deferred maintenance;
- ◆ Increase in the capacity of existing facilities to meet growing demand; and
- ◆ Development of new facilities to provide additional services.

SDOT prioritizes its projects to prepare recommendations on which to include in the budget, the CIP, and the grant development process. The process includes four steps.

Step 1: Identification of Transportation Needs

This step is an ongoing process during which projects for future funding are identified. These needs are developed from a number of sources (not in any priority):

- Ongoing operations and maintenance programs
- Backlog of projects
- Projects in current CIP
- Transportation Strategic Plan
- Projects from SDOT planning
- Neighborhood plans and citizen requests
- Coordination with partner agencies

Step 2: Identification of non-discretionary programs and projects.

This step identifies non-discretionary programs and projects that must be budgeted for completion. Criteria for these items are as follows:

- Mandated, with serious consequences for failing to met the mandate (e.g. debt service, judgment and claims payments, Metro "Ride-Free Zone" payment, federal or state law mandates)
- Essential for the Department to function on a daily basis (e.g. accounting, payroll, human resources, facility rental, vehicles and equipment)
- Reimbursable services to other City departments or outside agencies (e.g. street use permitting, repairing utility cuts)
- Restricted funding services (e.g. support for Sound Transit, Monorail, Metro, Alaskan Way Viaduct)
- Services that generate revenue for General Subfund (e.g. parking)
- Currently in construction (stopping these projects would be more costly than completing them)
- Urgent safety or emergency need (e.g. landslide, sinkhole)

Step 3: Prioritization of Discretionary Projects

The projects remaining after Step 2 are then ranked based on a 100 point scoring system. This prioritization process evaluates each project on its merits. Following are the criteria applied to this evaluation:

- Safety
- Preserving and maintaining infrastructure
- Cost effectiveness or cost avoidance
- Mobility improvement
- Economic development
- Comprehensive Plan/Urban Village land use strategy
- Improving the Environment

Step 4: Ordering Projects for Implementation

Once projects have been grouped into priority categories, they are evaluated to determine their readiness for funding and implementation. For example, even though a project may be a high priority, other circumstances may determine that the project is not ready for funding and implementation. Four criteria are used to make this determination:

- Funding availability
- Interagency coordination
- Geographic balance
- Constituent balance

SDOT staff use the results of steps 3 and 4 together in order to identify projects for which funding will be sought through grants, appropriations or other sources. Funded projects will be incorporated into the CIP.

Anticipated Operating Expenses Associated with Capital Facilities Projects

In some projects, the Department has identified operations and maintenance costs of zero, or has not calculated a number (N/C). In these cases, the cost impacts of the project are either insignificant or are offset by cost savings realized by other projects. Projects that do identify operations and maintenance costs, such as the Burke Gilman Extension and Lake Union Ship Canal Trail projects, have the costs built into the Department's operating budget.