



Memo

Date: October 22, 2024

To: Councilmember Dan Strauss, Chair, Select Budget Committee Councilmember Rob Saka, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Greg Spotts, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

Subject: SDOT report on new levy programs per [Resolution 32137](#)

As part of the 2024 Transportation Levy [Ordinance](#), City Council adopted Resolution 32137, which provides further direction regarding reporting and implementation of the programs to be funded by the proposed levy.

Per Section 2, Program Implementation, the Resolution requests program information as a part of the 2025-2026 SDOT budget. Only three of the four programs were included in the proposed levy—Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program, Transit Passenger Safety, and EV Charging. The District Project Fund was not included in the proposed levy.

This document responds to the Resolution, providing information about the proposed new programs, describing planned approaches, identifying foundational activities already underway or planned for next year, and highlighting initial readiness focus areas. Should the levy be approved by the voters in November, additional workplan development will inform the 2025 Transportation Levy Workplan, due January 31.

Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program

In the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, provide procedures and processes for administration of the Neighborhood-Initiated Safety Partnership Program. The proposal should describe the processes for partnering with neighborhood and community groups and soliciting projects, evaluating and developing project proposals, and the project selection process, including by defining project prioritization factors and selection criteria.

The Neighborhood Initiated Safety Partnership Program (NISPP) would be SDOT's approach to build stronger relationships with Seattle communities that result in community-identified and co-created safety priorities. Geographically assigned staff would invest in building longer-term relationships with communities and stakeholders, serving as ambassadors for the department, and as single points of contact for community.

This approach builds on successful precedents from [Reconnect West Seattle and SDOT's Home Zone Programs](#), where SDOT identified community priorities through inclusive tools such as neighborhood steering committees, walking tours, community surveys, and on-line voting. [SDOT's Transportation Equity Framework \(TEF\)](#) identifies this approach as a key strategy to reduce barriers to participation with the Department; especially for those who have historically been least likely to participate in such a program. In place of an application process, SDOT staff would work in

partnership with communities in areas of historic under-investment to identify and develop projects that would do the most to meet community needs.

We anticipate benefits of taking a **geographical representative (GeoRep) approach** to include:

- Dedicated staff communities know they can turn to for information and questions about SDOT practices and approaches
- An ability to align multiple community input sources to allow SDOT to better understand community-identified priorities
- Relationships set a better stage for large capital project design and construction – helping to identify issues and concerns for resolution earlier in the design process
- GeoReps tee up safety projects for delivery by multiple programs, for which the NISPP program can match, extend, or provide project funding
- Over multiple-years, GeoReps can align project opportunities to deliver more holistic, cumulative benefits for the communities in which they are engaged
- Development of long-term, non-transactional relationships will be a key priority identified in SDOT’s TEF and throughout Seattle Transportation Plan development as a meaningful way to work equitably with communities and organizations

Proposed NISPP Approach:

- SDOT assigns GeoReps to three areas of Seattle: north, central and south
- The GeoReps are charged with building relationships with communities within their areas, both the organizations that we know and those we know we need to bring to the table because they have been historically left out of our community engagement
- GeoReps track community requests for projects, aligning multiple inputs to SDOT from community, including district Council offices. Tracking allows us to transparently show community what has been requested and report back on progress
- GeoReps will work with SDOT program owners and project developers to inform annual workplans and project designs to address community safety needs. NISPP funds are used to pay for projects directly, or match/extend other program funds
- GeoReps work externally with other City departments (DON, OED, OPCD, Parks, etc.) as a single-point of contact, better facilitating Citywide response on traffic safety requests

Community Request Tracking:

Building a system that can serve as a full repository of funded and unfunded requests will be a foundation for this program. Requests for stop signs, crosswalks, speed humps and other safety requests come into SDOT from a variety of sources: Find It Fix It, 684-ROAD, Councilmembers, transportation plans, community meetings, transportation operations requests, etc. Consolidated tracking will allow SDOT to better align those community needs with SDOT’s neighborhood-safety focused programs. By working in conjunction with existing project tracking systems, such as [dotMaps](#), it can also help coordination between agencies, utilities, and private developers.

Project Co-Creation, Selection and Funding:

SDOT has many programs that are expected to deliver community co-created projects, including Neighborhood Scale Traffic Safety Programs, Accelerated Sidewalks, Neighborhood Greenways, School Safety Program (Safe Routes to School), and Vision Zero.

The proposed levy dedicates \$39.5M to the NISPP to build at least 10 neighborhood-initiated and co-created projects, focusing on community priorities across all districts with an emphasis on equity.

Co-creating projects with the community can happen in several ways. One will be connecting community interests with SDOT programs for consideration using the program's prioritization criteria. Another will use NISPP program funds to match or extend program funds, or to directly build high-priority projects that would not otherwise be funded.

Individual programs have their own selection criteria, though there are common themes across programs:

- **Established program goals**, for example, focusing pedestrian improvements in areas with higher demand for walking and rolling and near sensitive land uses, informed by the Seattle Transportation Plan, One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, and SDOT's approach to asset management
- **Number of people who could benefit**, investing where there is demonstrated need to serve a large number of people and modes of travel
- **Geographic distribution**, balancing investments where they are most needed around the city
- **Optimal investment timing** to extend the life of our transportation assets
- **Equity**, with a focus on mobility for all people and an emphasis on those who are most vulnerable
- **Opportunities to co-create** with community or to align with nearby investments
- **Leveraging opportunities** from a grant or partner investment
- **Community priority**, as identified through a plan or community process

NISPP Good Governance and Work planning:

NISPP-funded projects, across multiple programs, will be identified each year in the Annual Levy Workplan, due January 31. Progress would be reported to the Levy Oversight Committee through quarterly and annual reports that would also be posted publicly.

Transit Passenger Safety

In the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, provide a description of how funding for this purpose will be used. The proposal should primarily prioritize funding for transit and public safety personnel services on-transit, with secondary consideration given to infrastructure improvements for physical security. Funding should be frontloaded for the greatest impact in the near-term to (1) provide a safe, welcoming environment for transit riders and operators, (2) reset and improve upon passenger norms regarding what constitutes acceptable behavior and conduct while riding transit, (3) increase the public's perception of safety and security while riding transit, and (4) boost

ridership. SDOT should coordinate implementation of any strategies with King County Metro (“Metro”), and the funding designated for this purpose should not be used to supplant Metro’s funding for personnel security services.

The levy proposes to invest \$9M for Transit Passenger Safety in strategies that increase transit rider safety and security, including transit and public safety personnel services in coordination with King County Metro, Sound Transit and other agencies.

SDOT plans to evaluate coordinated transit passenger safety efforts already underway with King County Metro (Metro), leveraging the new funds over the first several years of the levy, and lean into data-informed decision making – in collaboration with Metro, Sound Transit and local community-based organizations – to inform additional, non-duplicative investments beginning in January 2026.

Transit Passenger Safety Landscape: King County Metro (Metro) and Sound Transit (ST) are each investing tens of millions into improving transit passenger safety. While there is still considerable work to be done in improving the transit passenger experience, our transit agency partners’ efforts are having an impact and security incidents are decreasing.

- Metro is investing in Metro Transit Police, Transit Security Officers, and several pilots as part of their Safety, Security and Fare Enforcement (SaFE) Reform Initiative. This initiative includes deployment of transit security officers across the transit system, a behavioral health support team that provides de-escalation and connections to services for those in crisis, as well as a pilot Transit Ambassador Program to provide in-person assistance, wayfinding, and general support to transit riders.
- SDOT is already using Seattle Transit Measure (STM) funds under proviso for this purpose in the 2024 City Budget, partnering with Metro to expand the reach of Metro’s Transit Ambassador program to more locations within Seattle and investing in associated transit rider safety pilot programs.
- Like Metro, Sound Transit also increased their investment in transit security officers throughout the ST system and leveraged its Fare Ambassador Program, which focuses on fare enforcement and de-escalation.

2025 Readiness Actions

To better understand opportunities for physical improvements and partnerships, SDOT will start by identifying the highest transit passenger safety priority needs working with Metro, Sound Transit and other agency partners to analyze transit stops and transit corridors with high ridership and higher instances of safety incidents. In addition to using existing data sources, SDOT will capture community feedback about specific safety issues on transit through tools like public life surveys, engagement with community-based organizations and other mechanisms. Collecting and assessing this data is a critical step in SDOT’s readiness to strategically invest levy resources.

Given the complexity of the transit passenger safety landscape, SDOT is evaluating three primary areas for the Transit Passenger Safety levy investments:

- **Transit Agency Partnerships**

This will focus on providing increased presence, care and safety on buses and at transit stops to supplement investments of transit partners. SDOT will evaluate the current STM-funded expansion of Metro’s Transit Ambassador Program, along with associated transit rider safety pilot programs to determine the best pathways for additional levy-funded investment. Expanding and focusing Metro and ST efforts with Seattle funding allows the City to leverage investments from its partners and direct resources to areas of interest to the City, which could include specific routes, transit stops, or time of day. Enhancing existing transit agency ambassador programs will continue to be an important component of the Transit Safety Program due to legal and labor agreement limitations that prohibit deployment of non-transit agency staff on transit vehicles.

- **Physical Improvements**

Utilizing safety data, SDOT would invest in safety and comfort for people accessing transit at areas needing attention and areas that are high traffic. Examples of potential investments include real-time information, pedestrian lighting, benches, shelters, waste bins and waste collection, and greenery and murals to help enliven and activate spaces. We plan to target initial physical improvements to respond to the needs of corridors that will see increased transit passenger traffic due to Revive I-5 work, including Aurora Ave N and Rainier Ave S.

- **Development of New Partnerships**

The model for this effort is the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) in the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID), which provides wayfinding and directional support, a visual presence, de-escalation and service referral. Other potential partnerships models could be with another City department or non-profit to better support transit stops or corridors, such as in Downtown, or the Aurora corridor, where a social service response may be needed. These partnerships may offer the opportunity to increase and leverage maintenance and cleanup of key corridors, such as Aurora Ave, Mt. Baker or Rainier corridors to improve the passenger experience.

Transit Passenger Safety Good Governance and Work planning:

Transit passenger safety-funded projects will be identified each year in the Annual Levy Workplan, due January 31 of each year. Focus areas for 2025 will be the Seattle Transit Measure (STM) investment in Metro transit ambassadors and evaluating that effort; and developing a data-driven workplan that drives partnerships and physical improvement on key corridors impacted by Revive I-5 and at other priority locations.

Electric Vehicle Charging

In the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, provide a detailed plan for the deployment of electric vehicle charging stations throughout the duration of the levy. The plan should seek to deploy an equal number of new level two and level three charging stations, and it should include a monitoring plan to track the deployments against the identified need for charging infrastructure. Additionally, the

plan should describe how SDOT and other City departments intend to pursue non-City sources of funding for this purpose, including federal and state grants and public-private partnerships.

Seattle City Light is the City’s lead agency for vehicle electrification, with support from SDOT and the Office of Sustainability and the Environment (OSE). SDOT has a two-fold mission related to electric vehicle (EV) charging: advancing electrification is in alignment with our transportation mission and the sustainability goals set out in the [Climate Change Response Framework](#), and as stewards of the public right-of-way, we have a responsibility to guide the standards for where chargers are installed, and to do so in a way that is both equitable and responsive to changing technology and priorities. SDOT’s programming of the electric vehicle charging investments will both support the broader electrification work of the City, as well as the Department’s ability to guide public right-of-way allocation.

A good example of this partnership is the [Curbside Level 2 EV Charging Pilot](#). Since 2022, SDOT has partnered with SCL to install 58 public level 2 curbside EV chargers at 31 locations in the public right of way across Seattle. Each charging location was selected through a community process in which more than 1,800 location requests were submitted. SDOT streamlined location review, approval, and permitting to enable SCL installation and activation of all chargers. With new funding for electrification, SCL and SDOT together plan to build on lessons learned from this pilot to expand infrastructure and support for EV charging across the city.

In addition to evaluating the charging pilot, completed in Q3 2025, other efforts in development will lay the groundwork in 2025 for the levy EV charging infrastructure investments that would occur over the life of the proposed levy:

- **2025 Charger Installations**
 - Complete curbside charging pilot installations and a partnership installation to support car-share charging in the ROW.
 - Revise SDOT permitting policies to support private charger permits for right-of-way charging. Currently, SDOT issues permits under an existing “long term use” structure that results in a series of one-year renewable permits. This process precludes investment from private entities due to uncertainty caused by the current one-year permit duration. In 2025, SDOT will evaluate changes to our existing permitting process that would support SCL’s and private electric vehicle supply equipment companies’ ability to apply via a dedicated permit class, providing long-term assurance required for charging operators to make these investments.

- **Seattle City Light’s Transportation Electrification Strategic Investment Plan (TESIP)**

By early 2025, SCL will submit an updated Transportation Electrification Strategic Investment Plan (TESIP) for City Council approval. The TESIP is SCL’s strategic plan outlining key grid improvements and investments necessary to meet the demands of EV adoption in Seattle in accordance with our climate goals. This plan covers investments in personal vehicle EV charging, but also our bus and ferry infrastructure, goods delivery, and local government fleets. The 2020 TESIP guided SCL’s current-generation EV charging projects, including the Curbside Level 2 pilot. The updated plan will cover investments in 2025-2028 and be a foundation for levy-funded EV investments.

- Collaborative Grant Strategy to Maximize Program Funding**

Seattle City Light applied for a \$12 million Federal Highway Administration Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (FHWA CFI) grant that would install approximately 400 curbside level 2 chargers if awarded. Levy funds, if available, would help to provide local match, resulting in \$12 million of leveraged external funding gained in the first year of the levy. Leveraged grant funding will allow us to expand electrification installations. SDOT and SCL will also work to take stock of credits generated from the Washington State Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) and determine if they can be reinvested into charging infrastructure.

While 2024 has provided grant funding opportunities for SDOT and SCL to expand charging resources, the federal landscape for EV charging grant funding in 2025 and beyond is uncertain. SDOT, SCL and OSE will develop a collaborative, Citywide grant strategy that will support program success through the 8-year term of the levy.

- Monitoring Plan**

SCL and SDOT currently monitor the status and success of all City-owned EV chargers through online data dashboards and data-sharing agreements. These resources will be leveraged to provide quarterly reports on charger utilization and planned expansions. Planned expansions will be weighed against EV charging-need projections from a joint study conducted by SCL and the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) that sets goals for needed charging infrastructure based on predicted EV adoption. Starting in 2026, SDOT will prepare an annual plan describing anticipated levy spending and program and project deliverables for the upcoming year. This plan will include deliverables and monitoring for planned charger installations, partnership opportunities, active grant funding applications and awards, and usage reports.

EV Charging Good Governance and Work Planning

EV charging projects will be identified each year in the Annual Levy Workplan, due January 31. Deliverables for 2025 include:

Timeline	Deliverable
Q1 2025	SDOT Electrification Program Launch
Q1 2025	Coordinate with SCL on TESIP Implementation
Q2 2025	EV Charging quarterly data reporting established
Q3 2025	Curbside Level 2 Charging Pilot Evaluation Report finalized to inform next phase of EV Charging Infrastructure
Q4 2025	Grant prioritization strategy and tracking mechanism finalized across SDOT, SCL, and OSE
Q4 2025	SDOT EV charging permit and curbside EV charging policy finalized
Jan 31, 2026	2026 EV Charging Workplan included in 2026 Annual Levy Workplan