



City of Seattle

Seattle
Freight
Advisory
Board

To: Mayor Bruce Harrell
Deputy Mayor Adiam Emery
SDOT Director Greg Spotts
SDOT Staff

April 25th 2024

Via email:

Bruce.Harrell@seattle.gov
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Dan Kelly (Chair)
Stanley Ryter (Co-Chair)
Geri Poor
Dan McKisson
Nigel Baron
Howard Agnew
Eric Wright
Dan Gatchet
Erik Nielsen
Herbert Krohn
Waylon Robert

Re: Seattle Freight Advisory Board Support of Transportation Levy Proposal

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Director:

Thank you for your presentation at the April 2024 Seattle Freight Advisory Board (SFAB) meeting. The SFAB advises the Mayor, the City Council, and all departments and offices of the city in the development of a functional and efficient freight system, and on all matters related to freight and the impact that actions by the city may have on the freight environment. We are responding to your briefing and our review of the Transportation Levy Proposal website, in light of our 2024 SFAB Workplan.

The Board has concerns regarding the Transportation Levy Proposal we would like you to take into consideration. We appreciate the support for maintenance and preservation on our city streets, bridges, and other assets. We endorse the proposal's efforts to address safety, climate change, and equity both in investments for preservation and with targeted funding as well. SFAB emphasizes the following three points:

- 1) **Major Street Maintenance:** The proposal's largest investment, to "Repair and improve streets" the street system, includes freight benefits to "Repair 20% of Major Truck Streets in poor condition." Elsewhere, these same corridors are noted for improvements for those who "walk, roll, bike, and ride transit." Sometimes, such improvements are in tension with each other. **It is critical that SDOT maintain freight functionality on these arterials, which are often the core of the city's Major Truck Streets.** Safety improvements are vital and must maintain the standards that support the goods movement industry, rather than design-deviations that narrow lanes to less than the 11' standard or turns which increase risks to pedestrians and cyclists as trucks are trying to make turns in narrow lanes.

The Seattle Freight Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the City in development of a functional and efficient freight system and on all matters related to freight and the impact that actions by the City may have upon the freight environment.

City Council Resolution
31243

- 2) **Keep bridges in good and reliable working condition and prepare for future bridge projects:** The city’s bridges carry freight and transit, two of the heaviest modes. After years without sufficient funding, this investment begins to regain critical ground for bridges crossing the ship canal. We strongly recommend funding to replace the failing bridges at 1st and 4th avenues over Argo Yard. Preparation for future city projects allows the city to capitalize on grants looking for developed projects.

- 3) **Increase funding for Freight Spot Improvement Program from \$25 million to \$50 million:** The Freight Spot fund only supports urgent, often safety focused improvements, typically in the urban/downtown core or Manufacturing Industrial Centers (MICs). In the past levy, funds were used to inventory urban loading facilities (public and private), rehab or remove old rail lines, improve signage, repair sidewalks, repave or remark streets, and fund studies (which led to grant awards, nationally recognized research, and partnering opportunities). Throughout the life of the last levy, this fund has been on target on spending, even when other programs were behind, because the needs for fixes in the Duwamish, SODO, and BINMIC are overflowing. This pot provides the only funding for improvements on the underfunded “minor” and “last mile” truck streets which have no other source of funding. We know that more freight spot funding would boost safety, equity, and sustainability. **We ask you to please consider at least doubling this smallest program in the levy proposal in support of industrial drivers and workers in the city of Seattle.**

We welcome the chance to talk further with decision makers to help them see what those of us working in the MICs see every day. Please remember, that the city’s MICs are unique compared to downtown or urban villages, or residential areas. These are areas where people work, at all levels of the economy, supporting goods movement, the region’s export functions, and international trade. Last year, the council unanimously passed the Industrial Lands Strategy. As a component of this, freight capacity must be preserved and maintained to support these land uses.

In summary, we generally support the Transportation Levy and its investments in the signals & operations funding, the breadth of other investments in this city-wide levy, and the Heavy Haul Network, to leverage Port and other agencies’ funding. We are eager to work together to improve safety, equity, and sustainability, and additionally, freight mobility to support Seattle residents, workers, and the city’s economy.

Thank you for your commitment to creating funding through the most practicable means and leveraging partnering opportunities.

Sincerely,



Dan Kelly
Seattle Freight Advisory Board Chair