



The League of Women Voters
of Seattle-King County

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Vote No on Seattle Prop. 1, Move Seattle

The Seattle-King County League of Women Voters recommends a NO vote on Proposition 1, the Move Seattle Levy. We understand the urgency of dealing with transportation and infrastructure problems in the City. However, after careful reading of the actual ballot language, including the appendices, and after interviewing experts from the pro and con committees, reading articles and commentaries about the projects and reviewing the relevant positions of the US, Washington, and Seattle-King County Leagues, we have a number of concerns about the measure.

Our primary concerns about this measure are with issues of transparency and accountability. While the proponents have provided categories to which funding will flow and detailed lists of desired projects, we are concerned that the levy language, even in its appendices, does not list projects in order of urgency or specificity. For instance, Attachment A of the appendices states only, "Arterial Roadway Maintenance: Repave up to 180 lane-miles."

In addition, the Spending Breakdown provides information about the **anticipated** deliverables, **anticipated** spending amounts, and the **anticipated** revenue sources; but the Spending Breakdown is **illustrative only** and shall not be mandatory. The City anticipates that appropriations of Levy Proceeds will be consistent with the programs described in the Spending Breakdown attached to the ordinance. (Emphasis added.) In addition, within a budget year, the City is authorized to reallocate unexpended and unencumbered funds from one program to another without adequate citizen input.

We recognize that the planning for projects has attempted to take a complete and city-wide view of serious needs in each of the categories listed in the Levy and that equity for all citizens has been prioritized so that underserved communities are acknowledged. It is important that those communities be able to see that their critical issues are being addressed and completed and it is fair that they get first attention.

Additionally, in its Whereas statements, the City acknowledges that they are currently updating the Seattle Comprehensive Plan For 2035. The Freight Master Plan is also currently in development. The Transit Master Plan (2012), Pedestrian Master Plan (2009) and Bicycle Master Plan (2014) are also being cited as inputs for projects identified in this levy. All these plans should be completed or updated on an expedited basis before this levy is funded. Without a comprehensive "big picture" of

our transportation needs, SDOT cannot effectively set transportation priorities. Updating these plans should be the first order of business.

In addition to our concerns above, we're also troubled by the fact that an entirely new and reconstituted City Council will be responsible for administering Let's Move Seattle if this version passes. We would prefer that those who will bear the responsibility for such a large, expensive, extensive and long-lived project were the ones who had participated in its design and approval.

We certainly recognize the challenges governments and citizens have suffered since Bridging the Gap was approved. We also understand that, due to serious loss of revenue, the city must act to fix the damage to all of the structures we have built and maintained as part of the common good. The Seattle-King County League and Leagues across the country have joined in the on-going efforts to promote fair and stable taxation. We are very concerned that, though we intend to be a progressive city, we still must rely on inequitable and unsustainable means of paying for infrastructure improvements. Frequent sequential levies demanding more tax revenue from those with and without financial means to pay for them is not a reliable way of funding.

It is good that two-thirds of the money will come from commercial real estate. However, as we look into the very near future and see even more increasingly burdensome levies on the horizon pushing homeowners' property taxes to unmanageable levels, we are concerned about the ability of even relatively well-off Seattleites to remain in their homes. It is a failure of those in government who have not yet communicated to the public that there are other, existing revenue sources that can be tapped. It is the responsibility of government leaders to claim a vision of equitable taxation and act with courage to implement it. It is their duty to design the legislation that defines and develops new methods of providing a secure, predictable and adequate flow of revenue that will maintain and continue to build our City of the future.

