



The Municipal League Foundation
220 Second Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104

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OPPOSES

Seattle Proposition 1
General Election Ballot Measure

Overview

The Move Seattle transportation and traffic levy authorizes a 9-year property tax to provide \$930 million to improve safety, address deferred maintenance and provide congestion relief. A home or property owner with a \$400,000 property (deemed an average home in Seattle by this measure) will pay \$275 a year or \$2,475 over the nine years of the levy. Over \$103 million dollars on average will be raised every year for 9 years.

The levy proceeds will be used to improve the transportation infrastructure in the Seattle area and will be apportioned as follows:

- \$207 million for Safety
- \$420 million for Deferred Maintenance
- \$303 million for Congestion Relief

Arguments FOR the Measure

The Municipal League believes that the following are some of the strongest arguments in favor of the Move Seattle Levy:

- Seattle continues to grow and now has the 5th worst traffic in the country. Concentration of growth, unique geography, and environmental impacts merit further investment in a better transportation network. Move Seattle's direction toward transit optimization and bicycle and pedestrian improvements is broadly the right approach, and given the amount of growth in progress, a large investment is justified.

- Successful transportation investments will improve connection to downtown and neighborhoods, improve mobility and provide choices.
- Funding would help address existing pavement issues and vulnerable bridges.



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- Seattle plans to invest in safety projects at intersections and near schools.
- Proposition one provides for accountability, including an oversight committee and use of high-level performance metrics displayed in a public facing dashboard.

Arguments AGAINST the Measure

The Municipal League believes that the following are some of the strongest arguments against the Move Seattle Levy:

- This is the largest property tax levy in Seattle's history and may exacerbate Seattle's housing affordability problem. The nine-year duration is also a concern.
- The proposed levy would be improved by more detailed and mature project descriptions, so that voters know better what they are being asked to approve and can better track execution of the projects. Current project list is non-binding.
- Projects are divided into silos by mode (e.g. freight, pedestrian, bicycle) rather than providing a more coherent corridor-based strategy for improving mobility.
- Despite years of special voted street levies that were designed to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog, the City still has an extensive deferred maintenance problem. Actual figures on the status of the pavement backlog are not available on the City's website and were last updated in 2010. Basic maintenance costs should be paid for using the City's General Fund, and the City's apparent lack of progress to date in addressing the deferred maintenance backlog provides little confidence that this levy will provide a different result.
- The previous levy had an oversight committee but its reports do not contain metrics showing how the maintenance backlog has been reduced, safety improved or congestion addressed.

Recommendation and Rationale

The Municipal League recommends voting NO on the Move Seattle Levy.

The Municipal League believes that an investment in Seattle's Transportation System is necessary but this proposal lacks specifics. An improved measure would include actual projects to be completed, measurable success metrics to be displayed on a public facing website, and a shorter duration.



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Transportation projects within the City of Seattle, such as the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement, the Elliot Bay Seawall and the First Hill Streetcar, plus the reality that traffic is much worse after nine years of Bridging the Gap makes it difficult to support a levy of this magnitude without a clear plan to materially improve transportation in Seattle and metrics to measure its success.

