

Transportation Impact Fee Rate Study – January 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Seattle, well known for its commitment to inclusivity and thoughtful modal plans, is a leader in progressive transportation planning, design, and implementation. To support the City's multimodal planning, this report documents the methods and assumptions used to develop a Growth Management Act (GMA) compliant multimodal Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) program that supports growth anticipated by the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan over the next 12 years. This multimodal TIF would help fund a project list that includes complete streets, transit supportive infrastructure, freight network improvements, and investments to create a more complete network for walking and biking. The proposed TIF program is based on person trips rather than vehicle trips given the strong nexus between new development and the need to expand the City's multimodal transportation network. The proposed TIF also includes reduced rates for certain areas of the City, including Urban Centers (UC), Urban Villages (UV), and areas within ½ mile of light rail stations since these areas are less likely to produce vehicle trips, which have a larger impact on the City's transportation network than trips made by other modes.

METHODOLOGY

The multimodal impact fee structure for the City of Seattle was designed to determine the fair share of multimodal transportation improvement costs that may be charged to new development. The GMA allows impact fees for system improvements that are reasonably required to support and mitigate the impacts of new development. The GMA also specifies that fees are not to exceed a proportionate share of the costs of improvements.

The following key points summarize the impact fee structure (refer to **Figure 1**):

- A single TIF project list was developed from the following adopted City plans:
 - Bicycle Master Plan;
 - Freight Master Plan;
 - Pedestrian Master Plan;
 - Transit Master Plan;
 - Move Seattle Plan; and
 - Capital Improvement Program
- Projects from these plans were evaluated for impact fee eligibility (non-capacity investments were eliminated, these were primarily maintenance and safety improvement projects).
- Of the remaining eligible projects, the portion of those projects addressing existing deficiencies or carrying non-city growth were subtracted from eligible costs, this included removing the portions of project costs earmarked for pavement preservation.
- The remaining list of eligible program costs were divided by Seattle’s expected growth in person trips over the next 12 years based on growth projected in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
- A land use-based fee schedule was developed using the cost per person trip calculated above. Person trip rates for multiple land use categories were estimated using vehicle trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition and the ratio of person trips to vehicle trips from the PSRC Household Travel Survey.
- TIF rates are scaled in different areas of the City based on estimated SOV mode share and needed transportation infrastructure.

Figure 1 – Impact Fee Structure



TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE (TIF) PROJECT LIST

Washington State law (RCW 82.02.050) specifies that TIFs are to be spent on “transportation system improvements.” Transportation system improvements can include physical or operational changes to existing transportation facilities, as well as new transportation connections that are built in one location to benefit projected needs at another location. Projects on the multimodal TIF list must add new multimodal capacity (new streets, additional lanes, sidewalks, bike lanes, low-stress bike routes, signalization, roundabouts, etc.). One important limitation identified in the GMA relates to where TIFs can be spent— notably that TIFs can only be spent on “streets and roads.” Most jurisdictions in Washington have interpreted ‘streets and roads’ as including “complete streets” facilities that are typically included in the roadway right-of-way and/or documented on roadway standard plans, including travel lanes, bike lanes, planting strips, sidewalks, crosswalks, midblock crossings, traffic signals, roundabouts, overhead signage, lighting, etc. Note that trails and pathways that are not within the public transportation right-of-way are typically not included in the TIF project list. An exception to this are rails-to-trails projects, which are considered roadway facilities in Washington State (RCW 47.30.070). Many trails and pathways are through park properties or on access easements through private property and thus ineligible for TIF funding.

The City’s goal is to adopt and implement a TIF program that supports the City’s growth and helps meet its future transportation needs. This multimodal TIF is specifically designed to meet these goals by funding multimodal projects that provide capacity for future growth and meet the requirements of the GMA.

The multimodal TIF project list was based on the Bicycle Master Plan, Freight Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Transit Master Plan, Move Seattle Plan, and the Capital Improvement Program, which identified multimodal transportation projects needed in the next 12 years. Fehr & Peers worked with the City to develop the TIF project list by removing projects that were not eligible for TIF funding. These included projects that did not add multimodal capacity or addressed only maintenance or safety needs. As a result, the TIF project list includes a network of complete streets, biking, walking, freight and transit-supportive projects on the city’s roadway system. In addition to removing non-capacity adding projects, the cost of pavement rehabilitation was extracted from the eligible cost of each project.

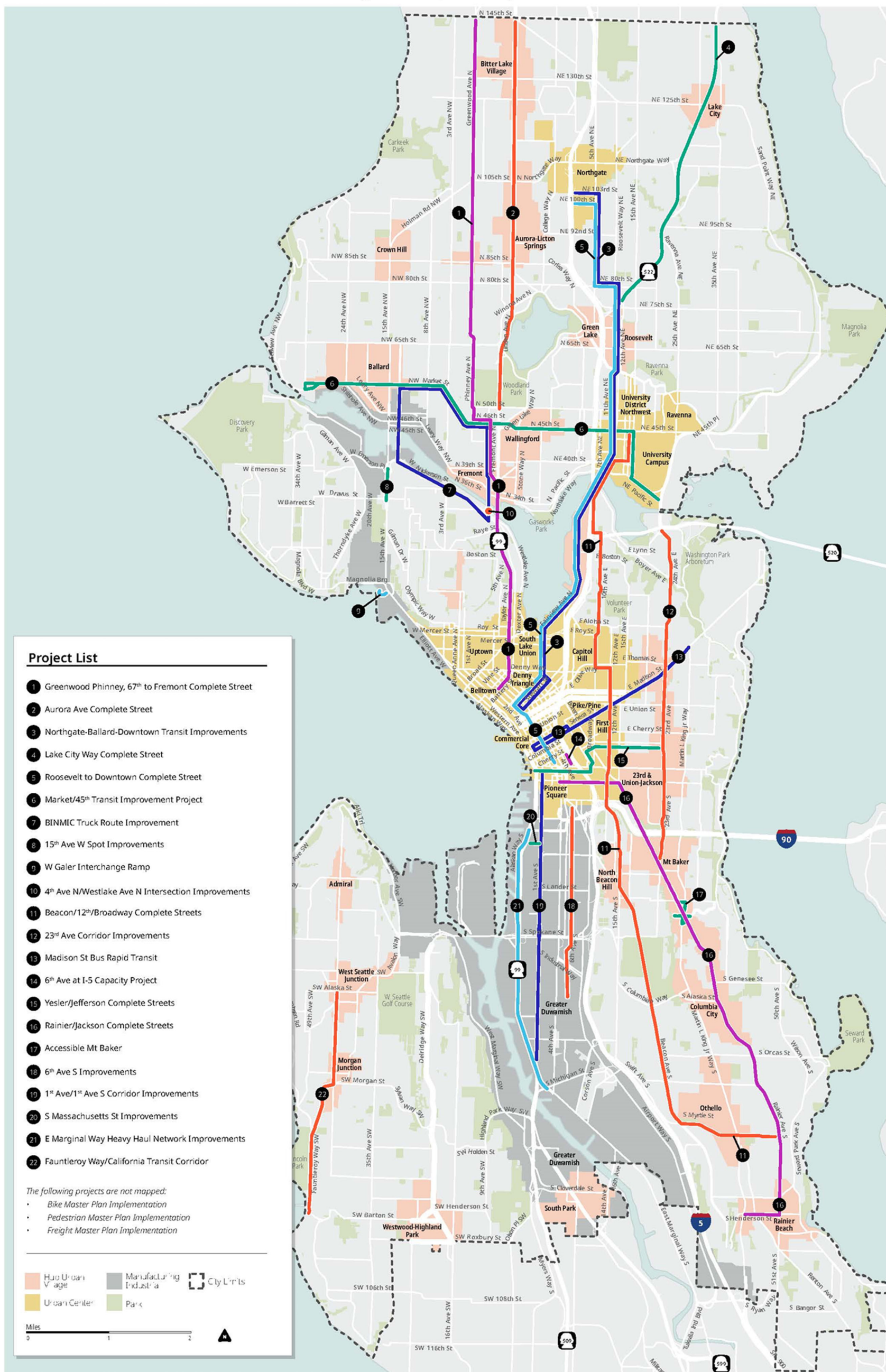
PROJECT COSTS

The project cost estimates included in this report are based on information provided in City plans or discussions with City staff. Ineligible costs, such as pavement rehabilitation, were removed. Any secured funding from other sources (for example, funding from the Move Seattle Levy) is assumed to be applied to funding project costs that are ineligible for impact fees. The resulting project list is shown in **Appendix C** and has 2022 total eligible project costs of \$1.07 billion. **Figure 2** shows the proposed multimodal projects

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with the exception of projects included in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans, and Freight Spot Improvements, as these projects are spread throughout the City or large areas of the City.

Figure 2 – Map of Projects



TRAVEL GROWTH

Determining the growth in travel demand caused by future development is a key requirement for a TIF program. In nearly every TIF program across Washington, the total eligible costs of building new transportation capacity are divided by the total growth in trips to determine a cost per trip. In this way, the cost to provide the new transportation infrastructure is fairly apportioned to new development regardless of scale or type. For Seattle's program, Fehr & Peers developed a method to calculate growth in PM peak hour person trips using the regional travel demand forecasting model and household survey data from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and trip rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). In calculating PM peak hour person trips, a trip was considered as travel between an origin and a destination. Each trip has two trip ends, one each at the origin and destination. As described in the introduction, this updated multimodal TIF is based on person trip ends rather than vehicle trip ends because the project list includes multimodal improvements that add capacity for all modes, not just vehicles. Since person trips can use any mode, they provide the greatest nexus for a multimodal project list.

The calculation of person trips required the steps summarized below:

1. Translate the Seattle land use data in the PSRC travel model into a format used for impact fees.
2. Estimate the person trip ends associated with the vehicle trip growth using a ratio of the person trip rate to vehicle trip rates from the PSRC Household Travel Survey and vehicle trip rates from the ITE.
3. Calculate total PM peak hour person trip growth over a 12-year period.

The following three sections go into detail on each of the steps above.

TRANSLATING LAND USES FOR IMPACT FEES

- First, total household growth from the PSRC model was converted into single family and multi-family units; single family households generate more trips than multi-family households, on average, since the average household size for single-family homes is larger. While existing households are assumed to be split evenly between single-family and multi-family dwelling units, net household growth over the next 12-year period is assumed to be from an increase in multi-family dwelling units.
- Next, employees were converted by different land use sectors into square footage using standard estimates of square feet per employee, listed below (these rates are based on Fehr & Peers' experience developing and applying dozens of travel demand forecasting models across the state):

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- 500 square feet per retail employee
- 250 square feet per office/government service employee
- 1,000 square feet per manufacturing/warehouse employee
- 350 square feet per all other employees

ESTIMATING PERSON TRIP ENDS

Person trip ends associated with growth in each land use type were estimated using a ratio of the person trip rate to vehicle trip rates. The person trip rate was developed from the PSRC Household Travel Survey and vehicle trip rates generally from the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition. How each data source was used is outlined below.

- PM peak hour vehicle trip rates were taken from the ITE Trip Generation Manual. The ITE Manual contains person trip rates for some land uses, but these data are not universal, and the sample sizes can be small. PM peak hour vehicle trip rates were taken from ITE Manual for the six major use categories in the travel model:
 - Residential
 - Retail
 - Office (finance, insurance, real estate, other services)
 - Government
 - Educational employment/school enrollment
 - Manufacturing/warehousing
- To convert from ITE vehicle trip rates to person trip rates, Fehr & Peers started with a vehicle-to-person trip conversion factor from the 2014 PSRC Household Travel Survey. With the ratio of person trips to vehicle trips identified, the ITE vehicle trip rates were factored. **Table 1** below summarizes vehicle-to-person trip ratio for each generalized land use category. These land use categories were further used to develop the full impact fee rate table shown in **Appendix A**.

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Table 1 – Vehicle Trip to Person Trip Ratio

<i>Generalized Land Use Category</i>	<i>Vehicle-to-Person Trip Ratio</i>
<i>Residential/Hotel</i>	1.45
<i>Office/Government/Higher Education</i>	1.22
<i>Primary Education</i>	1.26
<i>Industrial/Warehousing</i>	1.08
<i>Retail/Recreation/Restaurant</i>	1.25

CALCULATING TOTAL PM PEAK HOUR PERSON TRIPS

Total PM Peak Hour Person trips within the City were ultimately based on the growth in trip ends based on the expected 12-year growth in jobs and households in the City. The following summarizes the calculation:

- 2034 Total PM Peak Hour Person Trip Ends = 784,366
- 2022 Total PM Peak Hour Person Trip Ends = 699,266
- Growth in PM Peak Hour Person Trips = 85,100

This total PM peak hour person trip growth was used in calculating the TIF rate.

COST ALLOCATION

To meet GMA requirements, the TIF methodology must separate the share of project costs that address existing deficiencies from the share of project costs that add multimodal capacity and serve new growth. The resulting growth-related improvement costs are then further separated to identify the share of growth related to land development in Seattle versus growth from outside of the City. New development in Seattle cannot be charged a fee to pay for the capacity needs generated by development outside of the City.

TRANSPORTATION DEFICIENCIES

Impact fees cannot be used to pay the costs of addressing safety, maintenance, or existing level of service deficiencies. Based on an initial review of the project list, several projects that predominantly addressed current safety and state-of-repair issues were removed from the final TIF project list.

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EXISTING SYSTEM VALUE

To ensure that development in Seattle was not being asked to pay for a level of transportation infrastructure that exceeds what the City provides today, Fehr & Peers calculated the value of Seattle's existing transportation system and divided those costs over trips that are occurring on the network today. This methodology is similar to approaches that have been applied to develop TIF programs in Oakland, California and Portland, Oregon. This appraisal includes City eligible assets, such as sidewalks, traffic signals, bridges, and arterial pavement. The total value of Seattle's transportation system was calculated to be over \$21.1 billion. This total existing system value in relation to the 2022 PM peak hour person trips (which amount to 699,266) sets the maximum allowable cost per trip that could be assessed by impact fees at \$30,297 per PM peak hour person trip. (Note: This maximum allowable cost per trip is substantially higher than the rate justified by the TIF project list.) More information about how the existing system value was calculated can be found in **Appendix B**.

PERCENT OF GROWTH WITHIN SEATTLE

With deficiencies accounted for, all the remaining project costs are related to supporting new growth in trips. However, not all the growth comes from Seattle development – there is a portion of growth that comes from surrounding jurisdictions. Seattle does not have the authority to charge growth in neighboring jurisdictions for their share of building new transportation infrastructure. To account for this legal limitation, adjustments were made for trips that pass through Seattle or only have one end of the trip starting or ending in Seattle. Since a substantial share of traffic on some Seattle roads is generated by growth outside of the City, sources other than impact fees would have to pay the cost to accommodate growth outside of Seattle.

To calculate the share of trip growth associated with Seattle and non-Seattle development the PSRC travel model was used. The travel model is the best tool for this analysis because of the complex nature of how people travel and what facilities they use. For example, travelers on I-5 are more likely to begin or end the trip outside of the City of Seattle than those travelling on city streets. Therefore, Fehr & Peers analyzed traffic forecasts generated by the PSRC travel model for each project to find the portion of trips relating to outside growth in each area. Depending on the location, 49-90% of all vehicle trips are related to City growth. The PSRC model does not have a similar tool to estimate the share of non-motorized trip growth associated with development outside of Seattle. However, given Seattle's size and the relatively short

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average trip lengths for pedestrian and bicycle trips, 75% of bicycle¹ and 90% of pedestrian trip growth that use the TIF projects are assumed to be related to growth in Seattle.

Appendix C shows the resulting percentages of growth within Seattle for each project.

COMMITTED EXTERNAL FUNDING

Some near-term projects that are on the City's Transportation Improvement Program include committed funding from levy portions and funding secured from other sources. In total, the projects on the TIF list include more than \$45 million in committed levy funding.

COST ALLOCATION RESULTS

Figure 3 summarizes how the total project costs are distilled down to the eligible costs that can be included in the multimodal TIF. As shown on the figure:

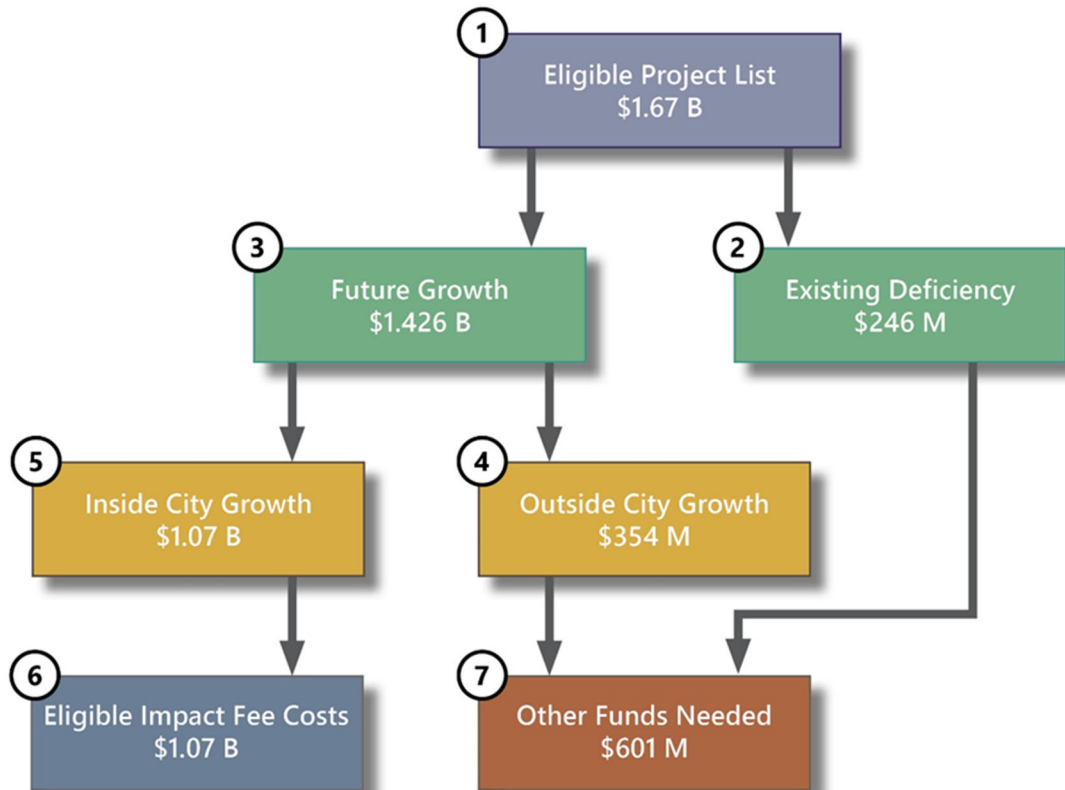
1. The total cost of the multimodal transportation projects on the TIF-eligible project list is \$1.67 billion.
2. The portion of project costs related to addressing existing deficiencies in pavement or capacity amounted to \$246 million and are not TIF-eligible.
3. The subtotal net TIF-eligible project list amounts to \$1.43 billion, which is then split into:
4. 'Outside City growth' amounting to \$354 million, which is not TIF-eligible.
5. 'Inside City growth' amounting to \$1.07 billion and
6. The net total of TIF-eligible project costs amounts to \$1.07 billion.
7. Non-TIF funds amounting to \$601 million will be needed to cover existing deficiencies and growth outside of the city.

The details of this calculation as they are applied to each individual project is shown in **Appendix C**. A description of each item in **Figure 2** is presented below.

¹ This proportion is the average share of the vehicle traffic that travels through the roadway TIF projects. Since bicycle trips are shorter, on average, than vehicle trips and since there are a greater concentration of bicycle trips toward the center of Seattle, this growth share for bicycle trips is considered to be conservative. Realistically, the share of bicycle trips on the bikeway projects is likely higher than 75%, but without a detailed bicycle origin-destination survey, there is inadequate evidence to substantiate a higher number.

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Figure 3 – Impact Fee Cost Allocation



- 1. Eligible Project List:** Complete streets, vehicle capacity, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and arterial crossing projects identified by the Consultant and City Staff team as projects that add system capacity which accommodates new growth. This box represents the total estimated capital cost of these eligible projects, which are broken into two groups:
- 2. Existing Deficiencies:** This is the share of project costs that address existing deficiencies in the transportation system. New growth cannot be charged to fix existing deficiencies. Each project was evaluated for its eligibility and any portion that is for maintenance or not adding capacity was removed. The sum of those costs is shown in this box.
- 3. Future Growth:** The share of the project costs that is not addressing existing deficiencies and can therefore be charged to new growth. This share of project costs is further divided into two groups described below.
- 4. Outside City Growth:** This box represents the share of project costs that benefit development that occurs outside of the City of Seattle. This includes trips passing through the City (which are not included in the TIF at all) and trips that have one end inside of the City and one end outside of the City (these trips are included at 50% of the TIF rate). The City does not have legal authority to charge impact fees to developers outside of the City limit. Note also that Seattle developers are not assessed impact fees for capacity projects in other cities or the County. Outside city growth must be funded through other sources and are not included in the TIF.

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5. **Inside City Growth:** This box represents the share of project costs that benefit development that occurs within the City and can be included in the TIF program.
6. **Eligible Impact Fee Costs:** This box is the culmination of the impact fee calculations and represents the share of total project costs that can be included in the TIF program. In summary, it is calculated according to the formula shown in **Table 2**.
7. **Other Funds Needed:** This box summarizes the additional external funding that Seattle would need to raise over the 12-year span of the TIF program to implement the projects on the list. This box is the sum of the Existing Deficiency and Outside City Growth boxes. When combining boxes 2 and 4, Seattle will need to cover at least 35% of the total project costs (shown in box 1) with external funding. Any additional external funding will reduce the costs that are included in the TIF. These external funding inputs are considered each year when the City calculates the new TIF rate.

Table 2 – Calculation of the Fee Per Trip

Eligible Project List Costs (1)	\$1,673,295,079	New PM Peak Hour Person Trip Ends	Cost per PM Peak Hour Person Trip End
Existing Deficiency (2)	- \$246,850,000		
Growth Attributable to Seattle (5)	x 49%-90% (range based on project type and location)		
Impact Fee Costs (6)	\$ 1,072,077,372		
		\ 85,100	= \$12,598

It is important to note that the \$12,598 cost per PM Peak Hour Person Trip represents *the maximum TIF amount that can be charged based on legal and technical requirements*. In other words, this impact fee represents the upper end of the TIF. When taking all the above calculations into consideration, the multimodal TIF program *could* contribute up to 65 percent of the total \$1.67 billion cost of the improvement projects. City matching funds, new grants, developer contributions, and other sources would provide the remaining 35 percent of the total project costs. However, the TIF rate can be set at a lower rate for many reasons:

- **Larger Share of External Funding:** The TIF is reduced if Seattle successfully secures external funding.
- **Implementation of Fewer Projects:** The project list is based on the Comprehensive Plan’s vision for the transportation system over the next 12 years. Depending on growth pressures, changing travel preferences, funding availability, and many other reasons, the City may choose to implement fewer system expansion projects, which could lower the TIF rate.
- **Balancing the Cost to Developers:** While Seattle seeks growth paying for growth, there are economic realities that must be considered when setting the TIF rate including what costs can reasonably be carried by developers. Many cities elect to adopt a lower rate than the legal maximum to ensure TIF rates are in-line with neighboring jurisdictions while continuing to have developers pay a reasonable share of expanding the transportation system.

IMPACT FEE SCHEDULE

The impact fee schedule was developed by adjusting the "cost per trip end" information to reflect differences in trip-making characteristics for a variety of land use types within the City of Seattle. The fee schedule is a table where fees are represented as dollars per unit for each land use category which creates predictability in the calculation of impact fee rates. **Appendix A** shows the various components of the fee schedule (vehicle trip generation rates, person trip rates, and new trip percentages).

TRIP GENERATION

As described on page 9, trip generation rates for each land use type were derived by combining ITE vehicle trip generation rates with vehicle-to-person trip ratios derived from the PSRC household travel surveys and travel models.

PASS-BY AND DIVERTED TRIP ADJUSTMENT

The ITE trip generation rates represent total persons entering and leaving a development. For certain land uses (e.g., retail, convenience stores, etc.), a substantial amount of motorized travel is already passing by the property and merely turns into and out of the driveway. These pass-by (also known as diverted) trips do not significantly impact the surrounding street system and therefore can be subtracted out prior to calculating the impact fee. The resulting trips are considered "new" trips and are therefore subject to the impact fee calculation. The pass-by and diverted trip percentages are based on the ITE *Trip Generation Handbook* (3rd Edition).²

SCHEDULE OF RATES

The proposed impact fee rates are shown in **Appendix A**. In the fee schedule, fees are shown as dollars per unit of development for various land use categories. The impact fee program is flexible in that if a use does not fit into one of the ITE land use categories, an impact fee can be calculated based on the development's projected PM peak hour person trip generation and multiplied by the cost per trip as shown on page 15. In

² 'New' trip percentages are based on vehicle trips surveyed at land use sites. No comparable non-motorized data are available.

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In addition to land uses that are not listed in the impact fee schedule, detailed trip generation studies are also generally used for mixed-use developments where some of the person trips would be expected to stay on-site. ITE, the Transportation Research Board (TRB), and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) all have recommended methods to calculate the number of internal project trips associated with mixed use development. Methods like the ITE calculate vehicle trips and the same ratio of vehicle-to-person trips that can be calculated from the impact fee rate schedule.

TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE (TIF) REDUCTIONS

While it is fairly straightforward to translate reduced vehicle trips to a lower vehicle-based TIF, the transition to person trips and a multimodal TIF required a slightly different approach because a multimodal TIF does not distinguish between modes. The following sections describe how differences in urban form, transit availability, and mix of uses influence travel behavior. The end of this section outlines the recommended options for applying TIF reductions to UCs, UVs, and areas near light rail stations.

NOT ALL PERSON TRIPS HAVE THE SAME IMPACT

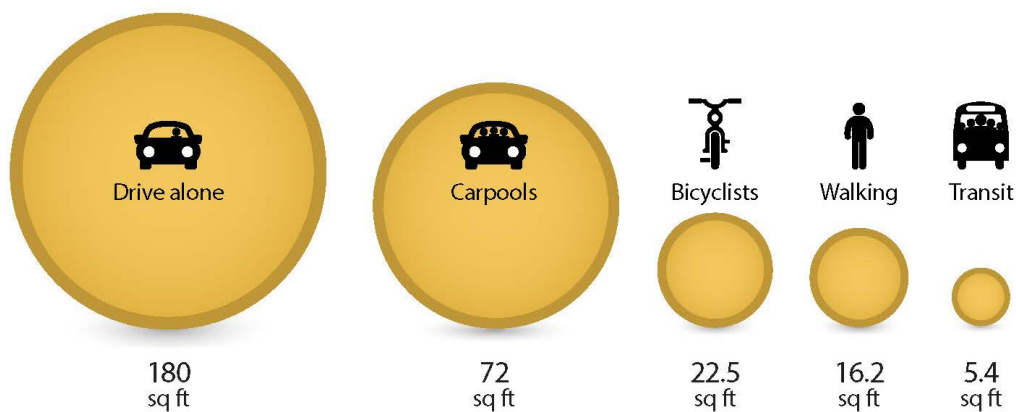
As noted above, mode neutral (person trip) TIF programs do not inherently account for the differential impact that trips have on the transportation system based on travel mode (e.g., walking trips require far less infrastructure and public investment compared to drive alone trips). In fact, this is the fundamental justification for why vehicle-based TIF programs allow for a fee reduction for areas/developments that generate fewer vehicle trips. For a person trip-based TIF program, however, there are a variety of ways to measure this differential impact. In a mature city like Seattle where roadway expansion is difficult, expensive, and often infeasible, one simple way to assess the differential impact of trips by different modes is through their use of physical space. Different modes have varying footprints on the City's transportation system, which is described below and illustrated in **Figure 4**. This approach is modeled after a similar approach developed and adopted by the City of Portland, Oregon.

- **Drive Alone** trips take up 180 square feet on average, based on the size of a typical passenger vehicle.
- **Carpools** take up 60% less space than driving alone per person trip. This was estimated using the PSRC regional travel model estimate that the average carpool carries 2.4 people.
- **Bicyclists** use 87.5% less space per person trip. This estimate was developed using a conservative assumption that bicycles are roughly a quarter the size of a car and no more than half of cyclists (and more likely fewer than 20%) are using arterial travel lanes (the remaining cyclists are using existing exclusive facilities, which include trails, cycle tracks, and bike lanes).

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- **Walking** takes virtually no space from vehicles in built-out areas with sidewalks. However, for the purposes of this program, it is assumed that pedestrians consume 91% less of the roadway space than drive alone travel. This percentage was based on the fact that pedestrians crossing the street reduce vehicle capacity slightly and that bulb-outs, crossing islands, and other pedestrian crossing treatments can consume roadway space.
- **Transit** requires roughly 97% less space per person trip than driving alone. This was based on each full bus requiring 5 square feet of space per passenger.³

Figure 4 – Physical Space by Mode



Based on the information above, a TIF reduction is justifiable to the extent that new growth in the UCs, UVs, and areas near light rail stations generate a greater proportion of non-drive alone trips.

LOCATION ADJUSTMENT DISCOUNTS TO RATE SCHEDULE

Using data from the PSRC 2014 Household Travel Survey⁴, the mode shares were extracted for different locations of the City. This was used to calculate an average weighted location adjustment per person trip within each area of the City. The location adjustment is a trip conversion calculated as how much roadway space each mode uses per trip compared to a trip made driving alone.

³ The Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual identifies a range of 4.5-5.3 sq. ft / passenger as "comfortable."

⁴ All trips to, from, and within each location area during the 3-6 PM period were analyzed. For the UV analysis, F&P's MXD+ tool was applied as well because the survey recorded trips at the census block group level, which are generally larger than UVs.

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Based on the expected land use and location of growth from the Comprehensive Plan, the total impact fee project list's eligible costs were divided by the growth in person trips⁵, which produced an impact fee rate of \$12,598 per trip. This is the rate used in the fee rate schedule in **Appendix A** and **Table 3** describes the location adjustment for each area of the City.

Table 3 – Urban Center and Urban Village Mode Share and Location Adjustment Requirements

	<i>SOV</i>	<i>HOV</i>	<i>Transit</i>	<i>Walk</i>	<i>Bike</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Avg. Weighted Location Adjustment</i>	<i>Basic Rate Discount</i>
<i>Location Adjustment Factor</i>	100%	40%	3%	9%	13%	-		
Location								
Seattle (not in UC/UV)	39%	33%	11%	14%	4%	100%	100%	0%
UV/area within ½ mile of LRT Station	36%	30%	15%	16%	4%	100%	93%	-7%
Urban Center	27%	17%	31%	22%	4%	100%	69%	-31%

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2016.

The location adjustment places a larger weight for trips generated in areas where trips are more likely to be made by modes that take up more roadway space (i.e. a drive alone trip compared to a walk trip). This reflects the City's desire to encourage more multimodal travel and aligns well with the proposed change in the LOS standard to a drive alone mode share target.

LAND USE ELIGIBILITY

All land uses proposed within an UC and UV are eligible for the TIF reduction except for auto-oriented land uses, such as drive-through coffee stands and restaurants, tire stores, and auto repair businesses that would likely not have non-auto mode shares.

⁵ The total person trip growth was 85,100.