

Office of Planning and Community Development

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Department Overview

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) was established in December 2015 with a mission of strengthening citywide planning and implementation and ensuring City departments are aligned and coordinated in planning for Seattle’s future development. OPCD coordinates City departments to ensure that development decisions and investments advance equitable growth, consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. The department is guided by its vision of “an inspiring city, in harmony with nature, where everyone thrives.” In addition to partnering with other City departments, OPCD works closely with community partners and other agencies to implement that vision. During the last five years, OPCD has accomplished a wide range of projects, including annual amendments and an in-progress major update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan; implementation of legislation to help activate downtown such as conversion of office buildings to housing, flexibility for downtown street level uses, and micro-housing regulations; industrial and maritime strategy planning; funding more than 77 community-initiated projects to combat displacement and increase access to opportunity through the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI); and numerous other items.

The director of OPCD serves in the Mayor's various subcabinets to facilitate coordinated decision-making regarding policies and investments that support Seattle's BIPOC communities. OPCD works with the Mayor's Office and members of the cabinet to ensure the City's investments support community development objectives and that department priorities are aligned and reflected in policies and budget resources.

OPCD is organized in four divisions: Equitable Development, Long Range Planning, Community Planning, and Land Use Policy & Strategic Initiatives. OPCD also has an Indigenous Planner that works across divisions. OPCD houses two independent commissions: the Seattle Design Commission and the Seattle Planning Commission. OPCD also staffs the Equitable Development Initiative Advisory Board.

Budget Snapshot

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	16,249,175	7,777,792	7,727,145	8,144,451
Other Funding - Operating	10,877,900	28,113,430	30,300,876	30,757,347
Total Operations	27,127,075	35,891,222	38,028,021	38,901,798
Total Appropriations	27,127,075	35,891,222	38,028,021	38,901,798
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	49.50	51.50	48.00	48.00

* FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here

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Budget Overview

OPCD's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget increases funding for the Equitable Development Initiative and continues to invest in the 10-year major update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Other priority items include subarea plan development, Sound Transit 3 staffing, community and long-range planning, and monitoring affordable housing and displacement. Because the City's General Fund revenues are less than forecasted, OPCD's proposed budget includes funding changes as well as staffing and administrative efficiencies that streamline operations while maintaining OPCD's core functions.

The Equitable Development Initiative

The Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) continues to be an important and growing program within OPCD, serving as a key inclusive growth strategy for marginalized communities in Seattle most at risk of physical and cultural displacement. The EDI program is coordinated and led by OPCD and guided by an implementation plan and financial investment strategy developed in collaboration with community members and staff from the Office of Housing (OH), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Office of Economic Development (OED), Office of Arts and Culture (ARTS), Mayor's Office (MO), and City Budget Office (CBO). It is also informed by an external advisory board representing impacted communities. In 2017, the City Council identified the initial five projects for the EDI program. The program has grown to more than 77 community-based projects today. Support for each of these projects includes a mix of capacity building and capital development funding, which can include funds for site acquisition. The proposed budget includes \$28.26 million for EDI in 2025. Of that amount, \$26.6 million is for grants and program implementation (\$21.43 million Payroll Expense Tax and \$5.13 million Short-Term Rental Tax). The EDI budget also includes \$608,000 Payroll Expense Tax and \$1.1 million Short-Term Rental Tax for EDI staffing. The total EDI budget represents a \$1.135 million increase in funding compared to 2024. In 2026, the proposed EDI budget is \$29.3 million (\$23.1 million Payroll Expense Tax and \$6.3 million Short-Term Rental Tax).

The EDI program was initially funded with \$16 million in one-time proceeds from the sale of surplus property known as the Civic Square Block. The Washington State Legislature passed the Short-Term Rental Tax (STRT) in the 2018 legislative session and therefore, since 2019, the EDI program has also been funded with STRT revenues. In July 2019, the City Council passed Ordinance 125872, which created a new fund for STRT and directed that \$5 million from this fund be dedicated annually to EDI projects; additional STRT funds EDI staffing.

The most recent expansion of EDI occurred in the 2022 Adopted Budget with the additional allocation of \$14.3 million from the Payroll Expense Tax. In addition to grant awards, the baseline budget from this funding source supports staffing to help the EDI team administer its funding and projects as well as to provide technical assistance to community organizations. This tax was imposed via Ordinance 126108, which was approved by the City Council in July 2020.

In prior years, the EDI budget included \$430,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for EDI grants. This funding was removed in the 2025 baseline as part of a Citywide reprogramming of CDBG funds.

The ongoing funding of the Equitable Development Initiative through the Payroll Expense Tax and Short-Term Rental Tax means that City investments in these community-driven projects and land acquisitions will provide a lasting legacy for Seattle and its BIPOC community members.

Planning

One of the core functions of OPCD is to serve as the steward of the City's Comprehensive Plan, a 20-year vision and roadmap for Seattle's future. The Comprehensive Plan guides City decisions about where to accommodate and plan for new jobs and residences, how to improve the transportation system, and where to make capital investments such as utilities, sidewalks, and parks. It provides a framework to guide most of Seattle's big-picture decisions on

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how to manage growth to achieve environmental sustainability, racial equity, shared prosperity, and healthy and vibrant neighborhoods.

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that cities undertake a major review and update of their comprehensive plans every 10 years. Under the GMA, comprehensive plans must accommodate the growth that is anticipated over the next 20 years. OPCD is currently leading a multi-department effort to update the growth strategy for the planning period extending to 2044, during which the city anticipates growing to nearly one million people while adding more than 150,000 jobs. The new comprehensive plan, which we are calling the One Seattle Plan, will also be updated to reflect new and ongoing priorities like climate change and racial equity. The One Seattle Plan will be completed by the end of 2024 and transmitted to Council for adoption in 2025. Parallel to this work, OPCD is developing a multi-phase package of zoning changes to implement the plan and create new opportunities for housing and density in neighborhoods across the city. The first allocation of funding for this work was in the 2021 Adopted Budget, which added \$130,000 in one-time resources for OPCD to work on an Environmental Impact Study and engage in community outreach to support the next major update to the Comprehensive Plan. Additional funding was included in the 2022, 2023, and 2024 budgets. The proposed budget expands this effort with a \$350,000 allocation of Payroll Expense Tax for work on a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to study additional land use changes in Regional and Urban Centers.

OPCD leads the Sound Transit 3 West Seattle Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Planning Work Group, one of seven work groups in the Citywide WSBLE Work Plan to advance key policy discussions, draft recommendations for City leadership related to station location decisions, develop conceptual plans for stations, and undertake City-led community planning at station areas. 2025 work plan activities fall into four main categories: 1) advancing station design; 2) engaging in station area planning; 3) carrying out the City's Federal Transit Administration transit-oriented development pilot grant of \$1.75 million; and 4) coordinating with Sound Transit's Joint Development program. Early planning is underway in the Maritime and Industrial station areas that include SODO, Smith Cove, Interbay, and Ballard. Station area planning for Delridge and Chinatown International District continues through the South Delridge community planning process and coordinated South Downtown Hub with Sound Transit. The 2023 Adopted Budget included \$162,000 to fund one term-limited position (through 2025) to support City work on WSBLE-related items. The proposed budget makes this position permanent, as work on ST3 is anticipated to continue for the foreseeable future.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	Dollars	FTE
2024 Adopted Budget	35,891,222	51.50
Baseline		
Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget	994,428	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	368,014	-
Removal of One-Time Items	(180,000)	-
Removal of CDBG from Baseline Budget	(430,000)	-
Remove Funding for Duwamish Valley Coordinator	(162,722)	-
Baseline Data Correction	-	-
Proposed Operating		
Increase the Equitable Development Initiative Grant Award Budget	1,676,839	-
Fund Equitable Development Initiative Staff with Short-Term Rental Tax	-	-
Right-Size Planning and Development Specialist Staffing	(349,044)	(2.00)
Administrative Efficiencies	(35,000)	(0.50)
Comprehensive Plan Environmental Review	350,000	-
Extend Position Sunset Dates	-	-
Proposed Technical		
Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation	-	(1.00)
Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(95,715)	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$2,136,799	(3.50)
Total 2025 Proposed Budget	\$38,028,021	48.00

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget

Expenditures \$994,428

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect the Annual Wage Increases and Market Adjustments, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of Unions or other standalone Unions, for personnel costs included in this department's baseline budget. This includes increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, retirement, overtime and temporary labor.

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Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$368,014

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare, retirement, and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Removal of One-Time Items

Expenditures \$(180,000)

This item removes \$130,000 of Payroll Expense Tax that was added by Council as one-time funding for community engagement work related to the Seattle Comprehensive Plan in the 2024 Adopted Budget; it also removes Payroll Expense Tax amounts of \$50,000 in 2025 and an additional \$350,000 in 2026 for regional subarea plans as described in the 2023 Adopted Budget.

Removal of CDBG from Baseline Budget

Expenditures \$(430,000)

Revenues \$(430,000)

For the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, the Executive removed Community Development Block Grant funds from departments' baselines and reviewed department proposals for use of the federal grant funds for facilities and public services projects. This item removes \$430,000 of Community Development Block Grant funding from OPCD's baseline budget. In prior years, this funding was allocated for Equitable Development Initiative grants.

Remove Funding for Duwamish Valley Coordinator

Expenditures \$(162,722)

This item reduces the funding for a three-year sunset position added in the 2022 Adopted Budget. This Duwamish Valley Coordinator position supported implementation of the Duwamish Valley Action Plan and was funded by General Fund. This position is being transferred to Seattle Public Utilities.

Baseline Data Correction

Expenditures -

This budget-neutral item adjusts baseline data at the account level.

Proposed Operating

Increase the Equitable Development Initiative Grant Award Budget

Expenditures \$1,676,839

The proposed budget allocates \$22 million in Payroll Expense Tax (payroll tax) proceeds in 2025 to the Equitable Development Initiative. This item uses payroll tax funding to increase OPCD's Equitable Development Initiative grant award budget by \$1.68 million in 2025 and another \$2.68 million in 2026. This brings total EDI payroll tax funding in the 2025 Proposed Budget to \$22,040,000, including \$607,518 for labor costs. In 2026, total EDI payroll tax funding is \$23,069,907, including \$632,103 of labor costs.

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Fund Equitable Development Initiative Staff with Short-Term Rental Tax

Expenditures -

This budget-neutral item changes the funding source for a project manager position on the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) team. The 8-person EDI team manages a current portfolio of more than 77 projects totaling approximately \$120 million. This item replaces \$174,522 of Payroll Expense Tax with Short Term Rental Tax.

Right-Size Planning and Development Specialist Staffing

Expenditures \$(349,044)
Position Allocation (2.00)

The General Fund revenue forecast for the City's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget is insufficient to cover all anticipated Citywide costs. General Fund reductions were identified to mitigate this shortfall. To preserve critical City services, this item removes two Planning & Development Specialist Senior positions in OPCD.

After this adjustment, OPCD's Land Use Policy and Strategic Initiatives division will have four permanent full-time employees and a sunset position for Downtown Activation. The division will continue to work on land use regulation and growth management issues, including housing policy, zoning implementation, and special projects.

This adjustment also reduces the number of policy staff supporting the Seattle Planning Commission, which will have 2.5 full-time employees in 2025, including a director, a policy analyst, and half-time administrative support. The Seattle Planning Commission advises elected officials and City departments on land use, transportation, housing, and related plans, programs and policies.

Administrative Efficiencies

Expenditures \$(35,000)
Position Allocation (0.50)

In order to achieve business process efficiencies and General Fund cost savings, this item consolidates OPCD's administrative functions. Instead of having three administrative positions supporting the office in four half-time roles, this consolidation and reorganization assigns an existing 1.0 FTE for board and commission administrative support, and an existing 0.5 FTE for office-wide administrative support. The impact of this adjustment is an overall 0.5 FTE position reduction.

Comprehensive Plan Environmental Review

Expenditures \$350,000

The proposed budget allocates \$31 million in Payroll Expense Tax proceeds in 2025 to support economic development. This item uses payroll tax funding to conduct additional environmental review to support proposed zoning changes within existing Regional and Urban Centers with the goal of allowing more height and development capacity for housing. These changes were not included in the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping document for the major update of the City's Comprehensive Plan that is currently underway. The Supplemental EIS (SEIS) will provide the necessary environmental review for different increased height and density scenarios. The SEIS will build on the One Seattle Plan EIS and will analyze potential impacts of any proposed changes, including land use and urban form (bulk, shade, shadow) as well as citywide and local transportation impacts.

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Extend Position Sunset Dates

Expenditures	-
Position Allocation	-

This item extends sunset dates for four positions in order to continue work that has been extended or is otherwise ongoing. No additional appropriation authority is included because the funding for the first three positions is included in OPCD's baseline budget and the fourth position is unfunded. The positions are as follows:

- (1) An urban centers planner - This 3-year Payroll Expense Tax funded position was added in the 2023 Adopted Budget to work on subarea plans. These plans, which are necessary in order to be eligible for future Puget Sound Regional Council funds, are currently anticipated to be adopted in 2027. Position hiring was delayed until September 2023. This item extends the sunset date for two years (through 2027).
- (2) An equitable transit-oriented development strategist - This 3-year payroll tax funded position was added in the 2023 Adopted Budget to work with Sound Transit on light rail station area planning. Because Sound Transit light rail expansion is anticipated to continue indefinitely, this item removes the sunset date and makes the position permanent.
- (3) A downtown activation planner position - This 2-year payroll tax funded position was added in the 2024 Adopted Budget to promote economic revitalization. This staffer is currently working on site activation for the World Cup, land use changes and residential development south of the Dearborn light rail station, and the Lid I-5 reconnecting communities project. This item extends the sunset date for two years (through 2027).
- (4) An engagement and communication position - This 3-year unfunded position was added by Council in the 2022 Adopted Budget to support the comprehensive plan. OPCD needs to continue this position to work on zoning and subarea plan communications. OPCD has been utilizing grant funding to pay for this position but the grant funding is no longer available. This item extends the sunset date for two years (through 2026).

Proposed Technical

Ongoing Changes from Current Year Legislation

Position Allocation	(1.00)
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This change includes ongoing budget and/or position changes resulting from current year legislation in 2024, including the Year End Supplemental Ordinance. This item reflects the transfer of a position to Seattle Public Utilities that was included in Ordinance 127068 (the Mid-Year Supplemental Ordinance).

Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures	\$(95,715)
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Citywide technical adjustments made in the proposed phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare for the department. These adjustments reflect final decisions about these costs made during the Proposed Phase of the budget process.

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Expenditure Overview

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Appropriations	Actuals	Adopted	Proposed	Proposed
OPCD - BO-PC-X2P00 - Planning and Community Development				
00100 - General Fund	9,164,638	7,347,792	7,727,145	8,144,451
12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	-	808,970	1,089,914	1,145,040
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	1,144,435	1,729,064	1,883,905	1,242,753
Total for BSL: BO-PC-X2P00	10,309,073	9,885,826	10,700,964	10,532,244
OPCD - BO-PC-X2P10 - Design Commission				
30010 - REET I Capital Fund	628,867	684,804	759,627	796,802
Total for BSL: BO-PC-X2P10	628,867	684,804	759,627	796,802
OPCD - BO-PC-X2P40 - Equitable Development Initiative				
00100 - General Fund	7,084,537	430,000	-	-
00164 - Unrestricted Cumulative Reserve Fund	321,660	-	-	-
12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	806,318	5,134,948	5,134,948	5,134,948
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	7,976,619	19,755,643	21,432,482	22,437,804
Total for BSL: BO-PC-X2P40	16,189,134	25,320,591	26,567,430	27,572,752
Department Total	27,127,075	35,891,222	38,028,021	38,901,798
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	48.50	51.50	48.00	48.00

* FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here

Budget Summary by Fund Office of Planning and Community Development

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Actuals	Adopted	Proposed	Proposed
00100 - General Fund	16,249,175	7,777,792	7,727,145	8,144,451
00164 - Unrestricted Cumulative Reserve Fund	321,660	-	-	-
12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	806,318	5,943,918	6,224,862	6,279,988
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	9,121,054	21,484,708	23,316,388	23,680,557
30010 - REET I Capital Fund	628,867	684,804	759,627	796,802
Budget Totals for OPCD	27,127,075	35,891,222	38,028,021	38,901,798

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Revenue Overview

2025 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
331000	Direct Federal Grants	-	430,000	-	-
331110	Direct Fed Grants	41,710	-	-	-
334010	State Grants	805,357	-	-	-
360900	Miscellaneous Revs-Other Rev	52,906	-	-	-
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		899,972	430,000	-	-
Total OPCD Resources		899,972	430,000	-	-

Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OPCD - BO-PC-X2P00 - Planning and Community Development

The purpose of the Planning and Community Development Budget Summary Level is to manage a collaborative vision for planning that advances equitable development and creates great places in the City of Seattle that is consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, and to inform and guide growth related decisions for future development.

Program Expenditures	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Planning	9,668,259	9,186,736	10,103,080	9,905,840
Planning Commission Management	640,814	699,090	597,884	626,404
Total	10,309,073	9,885,826	10,700,964	10,532,244
Full-time Equivalents Total*	46.50	48.50	45.50	45.50

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The following information summarizes the programs in Planning and Community Development Budget Summary Level:

Planning

The purpose of the Planning Program is to manage a coordinated vision for growth and development in the City of Seattle that is consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, and to inform and guide growth related decisions for future development.

Expenditures/FTE	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Planning	9,668,259	9,186,736	10,103,080	9,905,840
Full Time Equivalents Total	43.50	45.50	43.50	43.50

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Planning Commission Management

The purpose of the Planning Commission is to advise the Mayor, the City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the city. The commission also provides independent analysis and promotes issues vital to livability.

Expenditures/FTE	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Planning Commission Management	640,814	699,090	597,884	626,404
Full Time Equivalents Total	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00

OPCD - BO-PC-X2P10 - Design Commission

The purpose of the Design Commission Budget Summary Level is to give advice to the Mayor, City Council, and City Departments, concerning City-funded Capital Improvement Projects, projects that seek long-term use of the right-of-way, or major transportation projects.

Program Expenditures	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Design Commission	628,867	684,804	759,627	796,802
Total	628,867	684,804	759,627	796,802
Full-time Equivalents Total*	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.50

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OPCD - BO-PC-X2P40 - Equitable Development Initiative

The purpose of the Equitable Development Initiative Budget Summary Level is to foster community leadership and support organizations that promote equitable access to housing, jobs, education, parks, cultural expression, healthy food, and other community needs and amenities. The goal of the Equitable Development Initiative is to address displacement and the unequal distribution of opportunities in order to sustain a diverse Seattle.

Program Expenditures	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Equitable Development Initiative	16,189,134	25,320,591	26,567,430	27,572,752
Total	16,189,134	25,320,591	26,567,430	27,572,752

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