

Seattle Arts Commission

City of Seattle budget process

Inspire Washington





About the City of Seattle's Budget Process

- Bi-annual Budget
- Two budgets: Operating & Capital
- The budget must always be balanced
- This year's budget chair: Dan Strauss



Cast of Characters in the Budget Process

Mayor: Creates the “first draft” budget and signs the final budget created by the council.

City Budget Office: Responsible for developing and monitoring the City of Seattle’s annual budget. They assist City departments to administer their budgets and oversee fiscal policy and financial planning activities.

Council: Reviews the Mayor's proposed budget, holds public hearings, and modifies the budget through committee meetings and amendments. The Council ultimately adopts the budget by ordinance, which is ultimately signed by the Mayor.

Budget Chair: Creates the Balancing Package which is the “second draft” budget. He also leads the budget committee meetings and has a lot of power over which amendments make it into the budget.

Departments and their staff: They submit their budget proposals to the City Budget Office, which then works with the Mayor to build a comprehensive budget proposal that is presented to the City Council.

Public: provides public comment and feedback to council

Commissioners: provides feedback and advocacy for the budget for the OAC

Budget Timeline: Broad Overview

April	Spring Revenue Projection from the Department of Finance and Administrative Services and the City Budget Office is released
May	City Departments prepare and submit Budget Memos to City Budget Office for analysis and mayoral consideration. The Mayor's Office reviews and provides direction to departments on the Budget Memos, giving direction on items they should include in their formal budget submittal.
June-August	Mayoral review and evaluation of department submittals. The City Budget Office in conjunction with individual departments, then finalizes the operating and capital budgets.
September	The Mayor's office creates and releases his budget
October	The Council begins its budget process
October	The Fall revenue projection is released
November or December	The Council votes and passes the final budget

Budget Timeline: Council process

End of Sept, no later than Oct 3	The Mayor's office is required to release its 2025 budget no later than 90 days before the start of the new fiscal year
End of Sept or early Oct	Presentations from Departments staff to Council on their budget plans
Mid to End of Oct	Central Staff do presentations for Council on departmental budgets. Councilmembers raise questions and identify issues they'll have to address in the Council's budget
Sometime in Oct	A few budget forecast is released
End of Oct or early Nov	The Budget Chair releases his Balancing Package (first draft budget)
A few days after the Balancing package is released	Councilmembers may submit amendments to the Balancing package. All amendments must be "self balancing" if budget is a factor. Successful amendments will have 1 sponsor and at least 2 co-sponsors.
Mid Nov	In Council meetings there is discussion and voting on amendments
End of November	Select Budget Committee votes on the budget
End of November	Full Council votes on budget

Budget Timeline: SAC process*

June	Publish letter to Mayor outlining budget priorities
Summer	Meetings with Councilmembers to discuss budget priorities
Early October	Publish letter responding to Mayor's budget
Early & Mid October	Meetings with Councilmembers to discuss potential amendments
End of October or Early November	Provide public testimony, if needed

*This timeline and activities might need
to be adjusted based on the 2025
Mayor's budget



THANK YOU!

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