

Guiding Principles for Consideration of Budget Proposals
2018 Budget
Councilmember Lisa Herbold, Chair of the Select Budget Committee

Pre-requisites

- Proposals must conform to law. The City budget must balance.

Equity

- Proposals should seek to ensure racial and social equity in City programs and the Capital Improvement Program, including consideration of geographic impact; strengthen the diversity of the city; and address affordability.

Fiscal Sustainability

- One-time revenues should indeed fund one-time needs.
- Ongoing expenditures must be backed by ongoing revenue sources.
- New programs or investments should conform to city fiscal policies and not create unnecessary financial risk or future revenue shortfalls.
- Investments should not only deliver good results, they should make careful and wise use of the people's money. On-going capital projects seeking appropriation authority should demonstrate responsible management of public dollars based upon sound financial assumptions, whether the funding source is levy-based, rate-payer, general fund, or other sources.

Effectiveness

- Programs should make meaningful progress toward solving problems, be evidence-based, and have a track record of success in achieving specific *outcomes*, and not just outputs.
- Investments should identify (or have identified in the case of existing investments) goals and specific measurable outcomes. This is important in evaluating success. Both new and existing programs should be subject to regular evaluation and process improvements. New programs may not have a history, but setting goals and specific outcomes against which to evaluate the programs, collecting data, and setting expiration dates which require evaluation before extending programs can help focus public resources on programs that most effectively serve Seattle's residents. Goals, outcomes and evaluation processes in particular should take in to account a race and social equity analysis.
- A shift in investments from an existing intervention strategy to new strategy should occur only after demonstrated improvement in outcomes and service equity for specific demographic populations resulting from the new intervention.
- Programs and policies should align with federal, State, and County strategies and recommended best practices where such policies are not in conflict with existing city requirements.

Transparency

- Budget deliberations, decisions, and justifications should occur in public; related documents should be available online as early as possible.
- Capital improvement proposals must be prepared with sufficient information upon which to base sound policy choices, and be clear on the level and accuracy of available information. Uncertainty or risk in capital projects should be reflected in greater Council budgetary controls, as appropriate.