

Capital Improvement Program

Overview

Capital Improvement Program Purpose

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year financial planning tool that identifies future capital investments and potential strategies for funding those investments. The CIP also satisfies various requirements of cities planning under Washington State's Growth Management Act.

Introduction

The City of Seattle owns and operates a variety of physical assets, ranging from community parks, roadways, bridges, office buildings, libraries, open space, fire stations, maintenance yards, facilities at Seattle Center, and more. The City must properly maintain these assets in order to ensure they are safe, lasting, and provide a welcoming and usable space to serve their intended purposes. The City's utility infrastructure is also included in the CIP, including electric, solid waste, water and wastewater utility assets. The City's capital infrastructure supports City operations, direct public services and programs, and in some cases, provides direct public benefits themselves.

Every year during the annual budget process, the City adopts a six-year CIP, which outlines anticipated investments over that timeframe. The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP totals \$6.9 billion over six years, with approximately \$1.3 billion of that amount designated for the 2021 budget year.

The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP document is a compilation of all legislative CIP adjustments made during 2020. This includes all legislative action that occurred in the following periods:

- Adjustments made prior to the transmission of the 2021-2026 Proposed CIP from the Mayor to the City Council including:
 - 2020 Q2 Supplemental budget adjustments
 - 2020 Q3 Supplemental budget adjustments
 - Stand Alone legislation and administrative adjustments made prior to the Q3 Supplemental,
- Council Budget Action adopted by City Council as part of the 2021 budget process,
- Adjustments adopted as part of the City's 2020 Q4 Supplemental budget process,
- Administrative transfers made by departments, in compliance with Seattle Municipal Code 5.08, after the 2021-2026 CIP was adopted by the City Council.

All allocation totals listed in this document are the sum total of the project adjustments made in the periods listed above.

Capital Planning Policies

The City has historically based capital planning efforts on a set of criteria that help set priorities among potential capital programs. [Resolution 31203](#), adopted in June 2010, set out the following policies to guide the City's capital spending:

- preserve and maintain existing capital assets;
- support the goals of the City's plans;
- support economic development;

- consider external funding possibilities;
- consider revenue-generating possibilities;
- seek regional funding for regional projects;
- pursue cost-saving commitments; and,
- pursue conservation and sustainability investments.

Additional specific considerations include:

- compliance with regulatory requirements;
- coordination between departments and with other jurisdictions; and
- public safety and health.

Project Cost Estimate Review and Validation Process

The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP continues to incorporate the process that was developed in 2019 through the work of the capital departments Directors group. This process reflects an improved approach to budgeting for large, discrete CIP projects in early stages of development and provides Council and the public with a better understanding of the risk and uncertainty associated with each of the projects.

The key elements of the process are:

- Discrete projects with an initial rough order of magnitude total project cost estimate over \$10 million will show a range of possible costs rather than an exact dollar estimate.
- Departments will appropriate and budget the estimated cost to reach 100% design, as shown on the CIP Project Page. They will also plan for, and communicate the remaining construction costs by using a midrange “Financial Planning Estimate” for six-year financial planning purposes.
- At the 30% design milestone, the project will be baselined and a total project cost and project schedule will be established. During the next budget cycle (or any subsequent Council action) the department will budget the full total project cost on the CIP Project Page.
- If the baseline total project cost estimate is under \$50 million the project will proceed through capital project delivery process according to current practice.
- If the 30% baseline total project cost is over \$50 million, the department will initiate a third-party review of the baseline total project cost estimate. The department will bring the results of the third-party cost estimate review to the Project Delivery Executive Committee and/or the Directors’ Capital Committee to determine the next steps.

The Cost Estimate Review and Validation process will be modified according to the findings of the initial pilot projects being used to improve the concept.

Capital Improvement Program Funding

Like all large municipalities, Seattle relies on a variety of sources to pay for capital projects. These include locally generated revenues (taxes, fees, voter-approved levies, utility rates, and user fees), intergovernmental revenues (including state and federal grants), private funding (franchise utilities, philanthropy) and debt issuance. These traditional sources continue to provide the majority of funding for capital facility investments. The City’s level of capital investment is based on the mix and amount of financial resources available to the City.

Debt Financing

Overview

The City uses multiple forms of debt to finance large capital projects such as Limited Tax General Obligation Bonds (LTGO) also known as councilmanic bonds, Unlimited Tax General Obligation Bonds (UTGO) or voter-approved bonds, and revenue bonds. Unlike pay-as-you-go sources of funding, the issuance of debt requires revenues in future years to repay the principal and interest expenses. Councilmanic debt is a common financing tool used by the City, but those obligations must be repaid from the same set of limited resources including Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), commercial parking tax (CPT) and General Fund revenues. See the “City Bond Issuance and Debt Service” in the Introduction section of the 2021 Adopted Budget for more information on debt financing.

In 2021, the City will issue approximately \$206 million in LTGO bonds to fund significant IT, Transportation, and Waterfront related projects. The 2021 LTGO bond issuance includes \$100 million to finance a substantial portion of the West Seattle Bridge repair work. The West Seattle Bridge bond debt service will be paid for with Real Estate Excise Tax.

Public Utility Funding

Both Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities fund utility projects with revenues from utility rates. Each utility has adopted financial policies that determine what share of their capital investments are funded through cash, and what share from debt. These policies are designed to balance the portion of current investments that are paid by today’s ratepayers, versus future ratepayers who will also benefit from long-term capital investments.

Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)

Funding of the City’s general government capital program is highly dependent on revenue from Real Estate Excise Tax, which is an excise tax imposed on the sale of real property. REET is a relatively volatile revenue source that generally tracks closely to local economic activity.

Along with most of the City’s economically driven revenue, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced the REET forecast over the next three to four years. The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP contains considerable reductions to REET funded CIP projects across departments. Additional pressure on the REET budget is the cost of debt service for the West Seattle Bridge Immediate Repair CIP project.

Historically the City has maintained a \$10 million REET reserve for precisely these types of economic situations and will use up to \$4 million of the reserve to fund core capital work across the REET eligible departments. The City will continue to maintain a \$6 million REET reserve to buffer against an even worsening economic downturn through the remainder of the COVID-19 crisis.

The 2021 Adopted Budget maintains the commitment made in the 2020 budget to use \$25 million of the City’s REET revenue for capital investments in new affordable housing. While additional funding for affordable housing is clearly a priority for the City, ongoing investments in our existing facilities is necessary to support the provision of other City services and to avoid costly projects that result from neglect and deferred maintenance.

Seattle’s Recent History – Major Voter-Approved Levies and Capital Projects

In addition to reliance upon general tax sources, Seattle undertook several major capital projects during the last two decades using voter-approved funds and councilmanic debt. Voter-approved capital projects include improvements to Seattle Center and construction of new or expanded community centers and parks, new or remodeled downtown and branch libraries, new or remodeled fire facilities,

parks improvements, transportation infrastructure improvements and replacement of the Elliott Bay Seawall. The following is a list recent property tax levies that are still actively funding projects:

- *The Move Seattle Transportation Levy:* The Move Seattle Levy, a nine-year \$930 million levy was approved by voters in 2015. The adopted budget appropriates \$110 million in 2021. Levy proceeds will be used to support safe routes, congestion relief, and maintenance and repairs of the City's bridges and arterial roadways. A major financing strategy in the Move Seattle Levy is the dependence on partnerships—leveraging external resources such as state and federal grants to accomplish transportation projects such as the S. Lander Street Grade Separation project.
- *Seattle Park District:* The passage of the Park District is the culmination of the Parks Legacy Plan project, led by the Parks Legacy Plan Citizens' Advisory Committee. The goal of the Park District is to provide long term, stable funding to support recreation programming, parks projects and the critical needs for investment in major and ongoing maintenance. In 2016, the Parks District began collecting property tax revenue, accumulating the first year of full funding for Park District projects. The Park District will provide over \$15 million in 2021 for major maintenance and capital projects.
- *The 2019 Library Levy:* A seven-year, \$219 million levy to support, maintain and improve core Library services. Included as part of the levy were resources for the preservation and maintenance of library facilities. The City Librarian and the Library Board of Trustees prepare annual progress reports that show how levy proceeds have been used each year. The levy provides an average of \$3.1 million annually for major maintenance and asset preservation projects; including maintenance necessary for building components such as roofs, floors, finishes, HVAC and mechanical systems. The levy also includes funding for earthquake retrofits at three Carnegie branches.
- *The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy:* A six-year, \$146 million levy to acquire, develop, or restore, existing or new, parks, recreation facilities, cultural facilities, green spaces, playfields, trails, community gardens, and shoreline areas. This levy expired at the end of 2014, and the Seattle Park District is now providing on-going funding to help address major maintenance needs, as well as park development, at the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks). As of the beginning of 2020 the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy Fund carried a balance of \$14 million. Parks will continue to spend down existing budget authority on project identified in the Levy throughout the biennium.

Funding Dynamics for Significant Future Capital Projects

Given general resource funding challenges, the City will continue to rely on mix of general government resources and voter-approved funding packages to complete major capital projects and to secure needed funding for basic asset preservation. The City has identified several major priority areas for which significant capital investments will be needed. The following sections describe these priority areas at a high level.

Public Safety Facilities

Planning for the future of Seattle's public safety facilities is critical to maintaining the high level of service expected of Seattle Fire Department (SFD) and Seattle Police Department (SPD). Both departments have a number of large capital facility needs, such as a new Fire Station Headquarters and

neighborhood precinct projects that will accommodate anticipated police staffing growth. This CIP provides funding for a new Fire Station 31 in North Seattle, as well as the replacement of the existing dock at Fire Station 5 on the downtown waterfront. In addition, renovation and major maintenance work is ongoing at the SPD North Precinct and the SFD Joint Training Facility

Transportation

The City's existing transportation network faces an extensive backlog of major maintenance. Current funding is insufficient to maintain the City's road, bridges, signs, etc. In addition, through a series of long-term planning efforts the City has completed "Master Plans" that identify large potential investments in a transit network, bicycle facilities, freight projects and pedestrian-oriented infrastructure. The \$930 million Move Seattle Levy will address critical transportation programs such as safe routes, relief of congested roadways and maintenance and repair programs.

Waterfront

The City has developed a comprehensive plan for the improvement of Seattle's central waterfront. The removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct provides an opportunity to reconnect the City to the waterfront and develop new open space to support the growth and economic development of central Seattle. There are five main capital projects encompassed in the Waterfront program for a total of \$737 million (not including utility costs).

Projects

The largest project—the Alaskan Way Main Corridor project—will construct a new surface street and an adjoining pedestrian promenade, providing access to the waterfront from Pioneer Square to Belltown. The Overlook Walk and East-West Connections project constructs the Overlook Walk, a new accessible connection between the Pike Place Market and the waterfront, and improvements to east-west streets connecting the waterfront and the rest of downtown Seattle. The program also includes projects to reconstruct parks located on piers along the waterfront (Waterfront Park and Pier 62/63 Park), expand the Seattle Aquarium and expand the Pike Place Market.

Funding

The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP contains a mix of resources to fund these projects and other elements of the overall Waterfront redevelopment. In addition to general government resources in the form of REET, commercial parking tax, and general fund-supported debt, the funding plan calls for significant contributions from a Local Improvement District (LID), philanthropy, and WSDOT. The LID provides that property owners who benefit from the project pay a share of its cost. LID formation was approved in 2019 and will provide \$160 million of funding for the waterfront improvements.

COVID-19 Impacts

The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP continues to advance the major design and construction elements of the Waterfront program. The projects contained in the Waterfront Program were identified as priority projects for the City during the budget process and remain fully funded through the sources identified above.

Protecting and Creating Opportunities for Workers

The City considers not only what capital projects to fund, but also how to deliver them and achieve broader goals for fairness, equity and opportunity in the community. The Department of Finance and

Administrative Services (FAS) leads several policy initiatives to ensure social responsibility and equity in the spending of City capital dollars.

Fair and equitable treatment of workers: FAS monitors and enforces fair and equitable treatment of workers in City construction contracts. In 2013, FAS increased its monitoring and enforcement of wage and labor conditions on City-contracted construction projects, including Office of Housing-financed projects. Funding was provided in 2019 to allow FAS to continue this program, including compliance monitoring for wage and labor violations for relevant projects. It also includes funding to support the Acceptable Worksite program, which trains, teaches and enforce anti-harassment and anti-bullying interventions on City-funded construction projects.

Reduce barriers to construction jobs: The City's spending on major capital investments can help drive employment within the local economy. Construction jobs and related positions offer living-wage jobs that can support individuals and families. The City's Priority Hire program provides training and opportunities for City residents to work on City-funded capital projects. For major capital projects, City contractors are bound by the City's Community Workforce Agreement, which is intended to increase employment for women, people of color and those living in economically distressed areas of the City through establishment of aspirational and mandatory labor hours for the respective groups. In 2017, the Priority Hire program was expanded to include application on public-private partnership projects with significant City investment such as the Climate Pledge Arena project and the Ocean Pavilion (Seattle Aquarium Expansion) project.

Women and Minority Owned Business (WMBE): The City continues to successfully address contracting equity for minority- and women- owned businesses. In 2011, FAS implemented a Citywide requirement on all public work bids and contracts above \$300,000 called the "Public Works WMBE Inclusion Plan" that continues to effectively encourage and enforce commitments by contractors to use WMBE firms. In 2014, FAS launched prompt pay initiatives which our WMBE firms report as very significant and meaningful for their business cash flow. The 2021 Adopted Budget maintains funding added in the 2019 Adopted Budget for FAS to procure technical assistance services for firms interested in doing business with the City, emphasizing assistance to WMBE firms. The objective is to provide WMBE firms with business and technical guidance that helps them compete more successfully for public projects, including better equipping them to participate on Priority Hire projects.

2021-2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program Summary

The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP totals \$6.9 billion for six years and includes approximately 535 projects¹. Approximately \$4.5 billion of the six-year total, or 65%, are utility projects managed by Seattle City Light (SCL) and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and mostly funded by utility rates. The Seattle Department of Transportation's CIP totals \$1.6 billion (24%) over the six-year period, while the remaining departments (Parks and Recreation, Finance and Administrative Services, Seattle Center, Seattle Public Library, and Seattle Information Technology Department) account for approximately \$786 million, or 11%, of the six-year CIP.

¹ The project total includes all projects with a CIP Project Page in the 2021-2026 Adopted CIP.

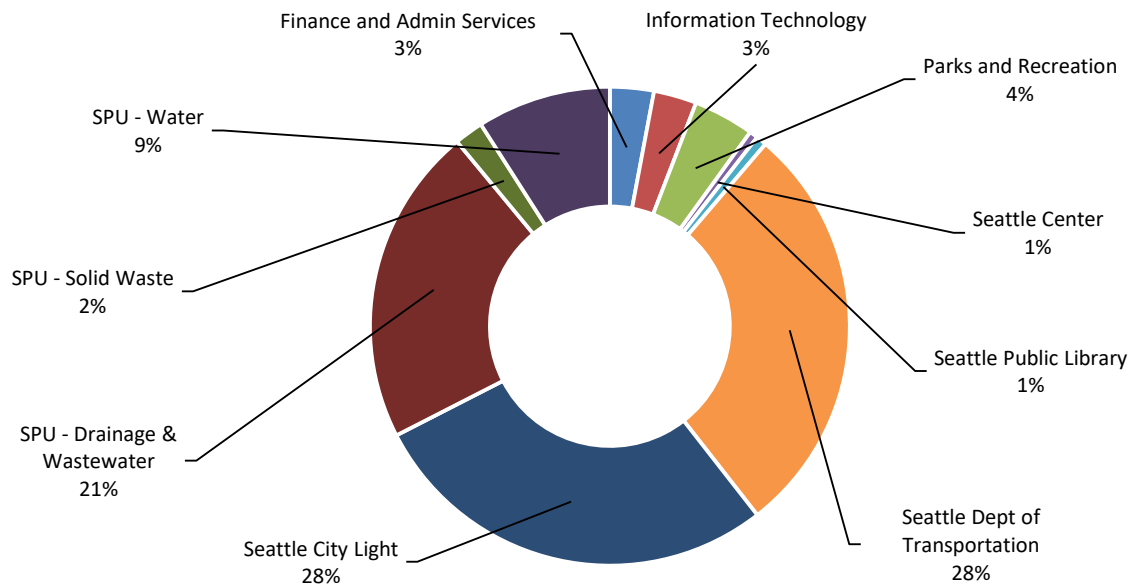
2021-2026 Adopted CIP by Department (000s)

Department	2020 Adopted	2021 Adopted	2022-2026 Estimate	2021-2026 Total
Finance and Admin Services	33,629	38,198	200,933	239,132
Information Technology	32,028	37,438	56,785	94,223
Parks and Recreation	86,714	52,970	301,722	354,692
Seattle Center	11,790	7,381	41,409	48,790
Seattle Public Library	4,768	9,237	40,110	49,347
Seattle Dept of Transportation	415,746	364,757	1,286,051	1,650,808
Subtotal	584,675	509,982	1,927,009	2,436,992
City-owned Utilities				
Seattle City Light	378,049	361,815	1,960,352	2,322,168
SPU - Drainage & Wastewater	270,026	278,390	1,055,888	1,334,278
SPU - Solid Waste	30,859	25,299	59,875	85,175
SPU - Water	115,527	116,778	611,045	727,823
SPU- Technology*	-			
Subtotal	794,461	782,282	3,687,161	4,469,443
City Total	1,379,136	1,292,265	5,614,170	6,906,435

Note: 2020 Adopted totals are based on the 2020-2025 Adopted CIP. Not all funds above are appropriated; see the 2021 Adopted Budget for a list of capital appropriations by department.

*SPU – Technology projects are now included in 2021-2026 Adopted totals for three SPU funds.

2021 Adopted CIP by Department - \$1,292 Million



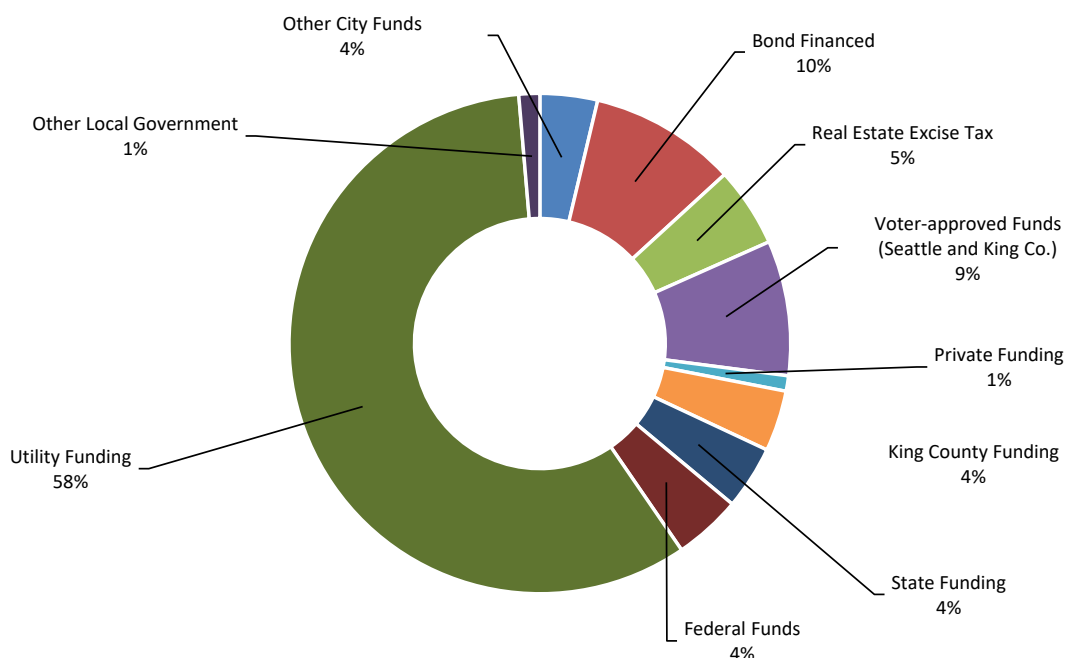
The table below identifies funding sources for the 2021-2026 Adopted CIP by Revenue Source Group

2021-2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program

2021-2026 Adopted CIP Revenues (000s)

Revenue Source Group	2020 Adopted	2021 Adopted	2022-2026 Estimated	2021-2026 Total
Other City Funds	69,510	47,950	229,782	277,732
Bond Financed	50,357	122,393	302,845	425,238
Real Estate Excise Tax	91,315	66,581	345,251	411,832
Voter-approved Funds (Seattle and King Co.)	159,067	112,815	376,360	489,175
Private Funding	18,170	12,814	92,010	104,824
King County Funding	53,106	50,833	74,418	125,250
State Funding	105,803	52,939	43,037	95,976
Federal Funds	57,134	56,305	102,002	158,307
Utility Funding	761,700	752,230	3,672,923	4,425,152
Other Local Government	12,975	17,405	19,498	36,903
To Be Determined		-	356,044	356,044
Grand Total	1,379,136	1,292,265	5,614,170	6,906,435

2021 Adopted CIP by Revenue Source - \$1,292 million



Asset Preservation

A 2002 Asset Preservation Study found that, despite achieving targets recommended by the 1994 Citizens’ Capital Investment Committee, the City still lagged behind industry-recommended levels of investment in asset preservation. The four general government departments involved in the study (Finance and Administrative Services, Library, Parks and Recreation, and Seattle Center) are responsible for approximately 6.9 million square feet of building space, 2.6 million square feet of parking space, and

240 million square feet of grounds (primarily green space) and work yards. These assets have a replacement value of approximately \$5 billion. Assuming an annual asset preservation funding target of 1.0% of the replacement value for buildings and 0.5% of the replacement value for other assets, the City should be investing about \$58 million per year in asset preservation. These percentage targets are consistent with those used by other jurisdictions that were polled as part of this study's review of best practices.

For 2021, the City will spend a total of \$29 million from the two Real Estate Excise Tax Funds and an additional \$51 million from various other resources on asset preservation for general government infrastructure in parks, libraries, civic buildings, and on the Seattle Center campus. The Department of Transportation will spend an additional \$13 million of REET resources and \$47 million of other transportation resources on infrastructure asset preservation during the 2021 budget period.

Neighborhood Projects

As the City adapts to the impacts of unprecedented growth, and plans for yet further development, a focus on the livability of neighborhoods is essential. The 2021-2026 Adopted CIP reflects this focus, and as highlighted below, supports neighborhood-scale capital investments in several different ways.

Neighborhood Matching Fund

The 2021 Adopted Budget maintains funding to Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) grant programs. A number of CIP projects, particularly in the Department of Parks and Recreation, include funding from NMF.

The City created the NMF in 1988 to provide funding to Seattle neighborhood groups and organizations for a broad array of neighborhood-initiated improvement, organizing, or planning projects. Many of these projects also support citywide initiatives such as Race and Social Justice, Youth Violence Prevention, Environment and Sustainability, and Neighborhood Planning. Awards range from a few thousand dollars (Small Sparks projects are up to \$5,000, and the Community Partnership Fund projects range from \$5,001 to \$25,000), and NMF funds can cover all phases of a capital project except property acquisition. The NMF program requires a 1:2 match for capital projects, which means all awards leverage other private and public contributions. Matches consist of volunteer labor, donated materials, professional services, or money. The Department of Neighborhoods administers the granting process.

Art and Design Funding for City Capital Projects - 1% for Art Program The [1% for Art program](#), established by Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 20.32, requires the City deposit 1% of eligible CIP project budgets in the Municipal Arts Fund for the commission, purchase, and installation of artworks throughout Seattle. The Office of Arts and Culture (ARTS) manages the 1% for Art program and the Municipal Arts Fund.

Municipal Art Fund revenues from the 1% for Art program can fluctuate significantly from year-to-year depending on changes in City capital investments. In 2021, the Municipal Art Fund is estimated to receive approximately \$3.2 million from capital departments for the 1% for Art program, as described below. Actual 2021 receipts may vary because of project timing, prior year credits, actual CIP expenditures, and City Council changes to the CIP.

1% for Art Revenues (Estimated)	2021 Adopted
City Light	\$431,000
Seattle Public Utilities	\$1,297,000
Seattle Center	\$10,000
Parks & Recreation	\$122,000
Transportation	\$1,309,000
Total	\$3,169,000

Design Commission

Established in 1968, the [Seattle Design Commission](#) advises the Mayor, the City Council and appropriate City departments on design and environmental aspects of the City’s CIP. Commission members are appointed by the Mayor for a renewable two-year term. Membership is comprised of two licensed architects, one professional fine artist, one appointee from the Get Engaged program, one lay member, and at least one and no more than two from each of the following categories, for a maximum total of five: professional urban planner, professional environmental or urban designer, landscape architect, and licensed professional engineer. The Design Commission is fully funded with funds from the Cumulative Reserve Fund.

Projects eligible for review include any on-or above-grade structure, including buildings and additions to buildings, bridges, park developments, street furniture, and all similar installations. The Commission reviews below-grade structures such as tunnels, arcades and underground passageways that are regularly visible to the public. Projects reviewed by the Commission must be financed in-whole or in-part with City funds, be on land belonging to the City, or be subject to approval by the City. Commission involvement in capital improvement projects begins as early in the planning process as possible, starting with participation in the consultant selection process and continuing through the many stages of project development. This includes project reviews at the scope briefing or pre-design stage, conceptual design, schematic design, design development, and sometimes construction documents stages.

Background of Capital Improvement Program Policy Drivers

As described above, City investments in capital projects are guided by a set of key policies reflecting the City’s values and priorities. These policies shape how the City takes care of buildings and infrastructure, invests in capital projects in areas that have accepted growth as envisioned in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, preserves the City’s historic buildings, supports sustainable building practices, and ensures that all members of the community have access to the economic opportunities capital projects create. The following section details some of these key policies.

Sustainable Building Policy

In February 2000, the City Council adopted a Sustainable Building Policy for the City of Seattle ([Resolution 30121](#)) which articulated the City’s commitment to environmental, economic and social stewardship and set the expectation that new municipal facilities meet established green building standards. Specifically, it called for all new construction and major remodel projects over 5,000 square feet to achieve a LEED Silver rating. When adopted, this policy was the first of its kind in the nation and represented a groundbreaking approach to demonstrating City leadership and transforming the marketplace.

Since 2000, the green building community has experienced exceptional growth in expertise and capacity. Recognizing this change, in 2011 the City passed an updated Sustainable Building Policy ([Resolution 31326](#)). The update represents a comprehensive approach that reflects advances in the green building industry, aligns the policy with the City's increased attention to climate change, addresses a greater range of project types, and ensures that Seattle continues to provide leadership that advances sustainable development in both the public and private sectors. The updated policies include the following requirements.

- For new construction, additions and major renovation projects 5,000 square feet or greater
 - The minimum required green building rating is LEED Gold.
 - There are minimum requirements for energy and water efficiency, construction waste reductions, and bicycle amenities.
- For tenant improvement projects 5,000 square feet or greater, where the scope includes mechanical, electrical, and plumbing:
 - The minimum required green building rating is LEED Gold.
 - There are minimum requirements for water efficiency and construction waste reductions.
- Completion of a Capital Green checklist is required for projects smaller than 5,000 square feet or those otherwise not eligible for a LEED rating.
- City departments are encouraged to test new approaches and standards, such as the Living Building Challenge and the Sustainable Sites Initiative.
- Annual reporting of performance under the policy is required by March 31st of each year.

Additionally, the resolution directs City departments to evaluate and improve existing standards and processes that relate to tenant improvements, leasing, and site management.

City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision and roadmap for Seattle's future. The plan guides City decisions on where to focus development for new jobs and households, how to improve our transportation system, and where to make capital investments such as utilities, sidewalks, and libraries. The Plan is the framework for most of Seattle's big-picture decisions on how to grow. The latest update of the City's Comprehensive Plan "[Seattle 2035](#)" was passed by the City in October 2016. The City will begin an update to its Comprehensive Plan in 2021.

The Comprehensive Plan helped inform the development of the 2021-2026 Adopted CIP as departments have taken special note of capital projects in neighborhoods targeted for substantial growth in the future or that have received substantial growth in the last few years. This effort is intended to make sure areas receiving growth have the appropriate physical infrastructure to accommodate such growth, while balancing the major maintenance of existing facilities, such as power distribution systems, pipes, community centers, swimming pools, libraries, and streets that are located throughout the City, not just in targeted growth areas.

Federal and State Regulatory Requirements

The City's utilities have several facility projects in their Capital Improvement Programs to meet federal and state regulatory requirements. The City of Seattle must abide by the City's two National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, one for storm water and one for combined sewer system. The City is required, for example, to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in the combined

Overview

sewer/storm water system over the next several years to control the number of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into receiving bodies of water, including Lake Washington and Puget Sound. This is per a CSO Consent Decree with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Ecology (DOE), which outlines how the City will become compliant with EPA and DOE regulatory requirements regarding sewage releases from the city conveyance system.

City Light operates its hydroelectric dams and powerhouses under licenses from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Licenses include Settlement Agreements that require City Light to perform mitigation and public benefit activities. City Light is currently completing Skagit Mitigation; is well under way with Boundary Relicensing; and began Skagit Relicensing in 2019.

City Light also complies with a wide range of permitting requirements and environmental regulations. Examples include the mitigation of soil contamination at former substations, and ongoing environmental mitigation in the Endangered Species Act project. Street-use permits and regulations are a major part of City Light projects that expand and repair the electric distribution system.

Endangered Species Compliance

The Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a 50-year, ecosystem-based plan that was prepared to address the declining populations of salmon, steelhead and other species of fish and wildlife in the Cedar River basin. The HCP was prepared under the Endangered Species Act and is designed both to provide certainty for the City of Seattle's drinking water supply and to protect and restore habitats of 83 species of fish and wildlife that may be affected by the City of Seattle's water supply and hydroelectric operations on the Cedar River. Seattle Public Utilities is continuing to implement its commitments under the HCP, which include downstream habitat protection and restoration, upland forest restoration, logging road decommissioning, and ongoing monitoring. City Light is also acquiring salmon habitat in the Green/Duwamish, Skagit, and Snohomish watersheds.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted an audit of select City of Seattle facilities, practices and procedures, in order to assess City compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and reported its findings to the City. While the City is largely in compliance, there are some elements within facilities that the DOJ has requested that the City update or alter to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The City is working on an update to its ADA Transition Plan that will guide the development of a long-term strategy that manages the City's most critical public-facing ADA deficiencies first and maximizes accessibility to the greatest extent possible.

A project manager in FAS coordinates and oversee implementation of ADA improvements in certain City facilities, determines and reports compliance to DOJ, and reviews and modifies as needed the facilities design and construction process with regard to the ADA. The City is in the process of moving towards a new approach to ADA improvements in which these improvements are included in ongoing maintenance and other remodeling work.

In order to provide additional proactive monitoring of compliance with ADA standards for new capital projects, the City added staffing dedicated to monitoring ADA compliance of new projects. All capital departments have a specific ADA coordinator and large departments such as Department of Parks and Recreation, SDOT, FAS have dedicated ADA staffing.

Historic Preservation

Overview

Seattle's commitment to historic preservation began with citizen efforts in the 1960s to block the demolition of two of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods—Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square. Both neighborhoods were threatened with proposals that would have irreversibly changed the character of the districts. The Pike Place Market was faced with an Urban Renewal Plan that would have demolished it, while Pioneer Square was threatened with a major roadway project. In 1970, the City Council created the Pioneer Square Preservation District, Seattle's first historic district. Then, in 1971, voters approved an initiative to create the Pike Place Market Historical District. In 1973, the City Council adopted a Landmarks Preservation Ordinance to safeguard properties of historic and architectural significance throughout the City, and more than 450 buildings, sites, and objects have now been designated as City landmarks.

The City of Seattle currently owns or maintains many of those landmarks, including libraries, park buildings, and fire stations. In 2001, the City began a comprehensive effort to survey and inventory both City-owned properties and privately-owned properties throughout the City. To date, the Department of Neighborhoods has completed surveys and inventories in 20 of the City's neighborhoods including Ballard, Belltown, Cascade, Central, Columbia City, Denny Triangle, Downtown, Fremont, Georgetown, Mount Baker, North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, Pike-Pine, Pioneer Square, Queen Anne, South Lake Union, South Park, South Seattle, University, Wallingford, Waterfront, as well as The University of Washington, city-owned properties, pre-1906 residential buildings, and neighborhood commercial buildings throughout the City. The results of those efforts are available in a searchable database on the [Department of Neighborhoods](#) website. However, due to reductions in funding this work is no longer on-going.