

Office of Sustainability and Environment

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Department Overview

The Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) develops and implements citywide environmental policies and programs that propel Seattle toward a sustainable, equitable, and carbon neutral future. OSE collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that foster equity, shared prosperity, vibrant communities, and a healthy environment. OSE develops policies and promotes green initiatives through four functional areas:

Citywide Coordination: Coordinates interdepartmental work on priority programs, policies, and outreach to advance the City's goals for a healthy, equitable, and sustainable environment. OSE's coordination work includes a focus on food systems, urban forestry, energy efficiency in City buildings, equity and environment, and environmental performance measurement. OSE is also responsible for administrative coordination of three prominent Boards and Commissions: the Urban Forestry Commission, the Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board, and the Environmental Justice Committee.

Innovation & Research: Conducts research and develops the City's next generation of environmental and sustainability policies and programs. OSE's innovation and research includes environmental equity, building energy, food policy, and transportation electrification, including implementing the Equity and Environment Agenda, Building Energy Benchmarking & Tune-Up programs, the Fresh Bucks food access program, and the Drive Clean Seattle initiative.

Climate Change Action Planning, Implementation and Measurement: Coordinates implementation of the Seattle Climate Action Plan to reduce Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions, including goal assessment, action planning, community outreach, and performance measurement. Centers racial equity and climate justice in climate planning and implementation.

Food Justice: Provides direct benefits that increase residents' purchasing power to afford healthy food through Fresh Bucks and Emergency Grocery Vouchers. Centers our residents experiencing food insecurity in our work to grow the local food economy, connecting local farmers, neighborhood grocers, and Seattle residents in need of food assistance.

Budget Snapshot

	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Department Support			
General Fund Support	10,163,301	5,760,474	8,663,311
Other Funding - Operating	-	6,718,919	5,929,814
Total Operations	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126
Total Appropriations	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	26.50	29.50	29.50

* 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

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Budget Overview

The 2021 Proposed Budget for the Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) represents a shift in focus from the 2020 Adopted, in order to meet immediate challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the ensuing downturn and sharply reduced revenue forecasts for 2021, the proposed budget includes \$482,500 in General Fund reductions to OSE. These savings result from holding positions vacant, reducing administration and overhead, and reducing – though not eliminating – program budgets for Drive Clean Seattle and commercial building Energy Benchmarking and Tune-Ups. The proposed budget continues to fund OSE’s Sweetened Beverage Tax programming at full amounts and continues emergency food access support.

Ongoing initiative support: Major ongoing initiatives include:

- Fresh Bucks
- Equity and Environment Initiative
- Duwamish Valley Program
- Climate Action Initiatives
- Drive Clean Seattle
- Building Energy Efficiency
- Food Policy and Programs

Please see previous years’ budgets for a description of these initiatives. As a result of COVID-19, the Proposed maintains and adjusts the following programs:

Emergency Grocery Vouchers: In March of 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OSE launched a program of Emergency Grocery Vouchers, providing families in need up to \$400 per month in the form of vouchers redeemable at Safeway supermarkets. An initial \$5 million appropriation was made using Sweetened Beverage Tax funding. Another \$9.5 million was later appropriated from Seattle’s Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund award, along with \$2 million in private philanthropic donations to the program. The proposed budget includes an additional \$3.4 million to support the continuation of Emergency Grocery Vouchers through the end of March of 2021, consistent with proposed legislation that also adds an additional \$5.6 million in 2020.

Oil Heat Conversion Expansion and Tax: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, implementation of the City’s new tax on residential heating oil has been delayed one year to September of 2021. The tax is intended to reduce carbon emissions and will fund programming to help homeowners convert from oil heat to electric heat pumps. (The City estimates that about 18,000 homes rely on oil heating within the city limits.) OSE will partner with Seattle City Light and the Seattle Office of Housing to fully fund conversions for qualified, low-income residents, as well as provide partial incentives to other customers. This program will also support a training program for businesses that may be impacted by the tax.

Municipal Energy Efficiency Project: OSE will continue to coordinate and provide technical assistance for the Municipal Energy Efficiency Project (MEEP), a capital project spanning multiple departments that makes energy efficiency improvements to City-owned facilities. In 2021, this programming will be supported by \$2.5 million in Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues. This budget sits in the relevant departments’ capital budgets. For more detail about this project, please see the Municipal Energy Efficiency Project located in the Department of Finance and Administrative Services’ 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program.

Incremental Budget Changes

Office of Sustainability and Environment

2021 Proposed
Budget

FTE

Office of Sustainability and Environment

2020 Adopted Budget	12,479,394	29.50
Baseline		
Revenue Update	-	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	132,348	-
Baseline Adjustments for Personnel Costs	37,884	-
Align Medical Costs	-	-
Adjustment for One-Time Budget Changes	(929,000)	-
Maintain Fresh Bucks Program Manager	-	-
Baseline Add for Benchmarking Database and Data Visualization Maintenance	10,000	-
Proposed Operating		
Joint COVID-19 Relief Plan	3,400,000	-
Transfer Funds to HSD for Fresh Bucks Good Food Bag	(55,000)	-
Delay Hiring Green New Deal Advisor Position	(132,000)	-
Delay Hiring Climate Position	(140,000)	-
Benchmarking & Tune-Ups Enforcement Pause and Technical Assistance Reduction	(150,000)	-
Reduce Drive Clean Seattle Program	(25,000)	-
Reduce Discretionary Staff Travel and Training Budget	(15,000)	-
Reduce Communications Budget	(10,500)	-
Community Programming Reduction	(10,000)	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$2,113,732	-
Total 2021 Proposed Budget	\$14,593,126	29.50

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Revenue Update

Revenues \$(450,000)

This change reflects updates to baseline revenues from the August revenue forecast.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$132,348

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.

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Baseline Adjustments for Personnel Costs

Expenditures \$37,884

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect an annual wage increase, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of Unions, for personnel costs included in this department's baseline budget. This includes increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, family medical leave, retirement, overtime and temporary labor. There is no increase assumed from 2021 to 2022. This does not include a 2021 salary increase for non-represented Executives, Managers and Strategic Advisors.

Align Medical Costs

Expenditures -

Technical adjustment to align OSE's costs associated with regular medical benefits with amounts in the Central Cost Manual.

Adjustment for One-Time Budget Changes

Expenditures \$(929,000)

This item adjusts the baseline to remove one-time adds in the 2020 Adopted Budget. These include one-time Sweetened Beverage Tax (SBT) funded adds for Fresh Bucks, water bottle filling stations in schools, funding for the SBT Community Advisory Board, and consultant support for an SBT programming evaluation and a scratch-cooking assessment. This adjustment also removes from the baseline one-time, Council-added, partial support for RVC's Green Pathways Fellowship. RVC intends to continue the Fellowship program and is currently pursuing external funding.

Maintain Fresh Bucks Program Manager

Position Allocation -

The Fresh Bucks program continues to be a priority program for the City of Seattle. This item removes an existing sunset date on the Fresh Bucks Program Manager Strategic Advisor 1, Gen Gov. position.

Baseline Add for Benchmarking Database and Data Visualization Maintenance

Expenditures \$10,000

This proposal adds \$10,000 to the baseline budget for the benchmarking & tune-ups program to perform needed annual maintenance for the database and visualization platform.

Proposed Operating

Joint COVID-19 Relief Plan

Expenditures \$3,400,000

As part of the 2020 budget, the Mayor and City Council have invested \$233 million in COVID-19 relief programs. To further address community needs, an additional \$45 million will be invested from the City reserves and other funding sources, with approximately half appropriated in 2020 and the remainder in 2021. The investments will be distributed according to a spending plan, which includes assistance to small business, childcare, individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their home, people experiencing food insecurity, and immigrants and refugees.

This item adds \$3.4 million in one-time reserves in 2021 to OSE provide Emergency Grocery Vouchers to eligible households through the first quarter of 2021. These vouchers, up to \$400 per month, were first issued in April 2020.

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Vouchers can be spent at Safeway supermarkets and will ultimately serve nearly 14,000 households. Eligible households are enrolled from existing city lists or by community-based organizations. Over the course of 2020, \$5 million in Sweetened Beverage Tax funds, \$9.5 million from Federal CARES Act awards, and \$5.5 million from the City's Emergency and Rainy Day Funds have supported this program. An additional \$2 million has been provided from corporate donations.

Transfer Funds to HSD for Fresh Bucks Good Food Bag

Expenditures \$(55,000)

This item transfers \$55,000 in Sweetened Beverage Tax fund appropriation from the OSE BSL (BO-SE-X1000) to HSD for the Fresh Bucks Good Food Bag Program. See HSD for the corresponding transfer. This transfer replaces the current practice of an annual memorandum of agreement with OSE reimbursing HSD for this work.

Delay Hiring Green New Deal Advisor Position

Expenditures \$(132,000)

Per Council's Green New Deal ordinance, a Green New Deal Advisor position was added to OSE in the 2020 Adopted Budget to help coordinate work associated with the Green New Deal Oversight Board and an interdepartmental team (IDT) to implement climate actions. Hiring for this position was put on hold due to the COVID-19 crisis. This item extends the delay until 2022, providing savings of \$132,000 in 2021.

Delay Hiring Climate Position

Expenditures \$(140,000)

This item reduces the budget to reflect a delay in hiring one of OSE's climate positions until 2022. This position is intended to eventually support OSE's work on building policy, including Performance Standards, Sustainable Buildings Policy, and indoor air quality. The position will also support policy development for clean energy jobs.

Benchmarking & Tune-Ups Enforcement Pause and Technical Assistance Reduction

Expenditures \$(150,000)

This item reduces for one year the Building Energy Benchmarking and Tune-Up budgets by \$150,000. The reduces OSE's in-house capacity to provide technical assistance for commercial building Tune-Ups. It will also lead to a reduction in trainings and pause publication of case studies and promotional articles. This reduction will also lead to a one-year a pause in enforcement of both Energy Benchmarking and Tune-Ups regulations for large commercial and multifamily buildings.

Funding will continue for OSE to continue providing technical assistance through a professional services contract, which will allow Tune-Up submissions to continue at a reduced level. With a pause on enforcement, existing staff will be redeployed in 2021 to take on administration of all help desk inquiries.

Reduce Drive Clean Seattle Program

Expenditures \$(25,000)

This item makes a \$25,000 one-time reduction to the Drive Clean Seattle budget. This will decrease the program budget by half and will reduce funding for community engagement and professional services.

Reduce Discretionary Staff Travel and Training Budget

Expenditures \$(15,000)

Office of Sustainability and Environment

This item reduces for one year OSE's discretionary budget for professional development training and travel. Support for professional development will continue at a reduced level within program budgets.

Reduce Communications Budget

Expenditures \$(10,500)

This item would reduce the budget for communications by \$10,500. This reduces resources for translation services. OSE will continue to provide translation services with existing program budgets and with internal staff.

Community Programming Reduction

Expenditures \$(10,000)

This item pauses funding used to sponsor annual events of community partners as well as funding for OSE's annual Earth Day event.

Expenditure Overview

	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Appropriations			
OSE - BO-SE-X1000 - Office of Sustainability and Environment			
00100 - General Fund	10,163,301	5,760,474	8,663,311
00155 - Sweetened Beverage Tax Fund	-	6,718,919	5,929,814
Total for BSL: BO-SE-X1000	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126
 Department Total	 10,163,301	 12,479,394	 14,593,126
 Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	 26.50	 29.50	 29.50

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of Sustainability and Environment

	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	10,163,301	5,760,474	8,663,311
00155 - Sweetened Beverage Tax Fund	-	6,718,919	5,929,814
Budget Totals for OSE	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OSE - BO-SE-X1000 - Office of Sustainability and Environment

The purpose of the Office of Sustainability and Environment Budget Summary Level is to coordinate interdepartmental environmental sustainability initiatives, identify and develop next generation policies and programs, and lead the City's climate change action planning to move towards carbon neutrality.

Program Expenditures	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Office of Sustainability and Environment	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126
Total	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126
Full-time Equivalents Total*	26.50	29.50	29.50

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The following information summarizes the programs in Office of Sustainability and Environment Budget Summary Level:

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Expenditures/FTE	2019 Actuals	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed
Office of Sustainability and Environment	10,163,301	12,479,394	14,593,126
Full Time Equivalents Total	26.50	29.50	29.50

