



# City Neighborhood Council

c/o 700 Fifth Ave, Suite 1700, PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

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## DISTRICT COUNCILS:

- Ballard
- Central
- Delridge Neighborhoods
- Downtown
- East
- Greater Duwamish
- Lake Union
- Magnolia/Queen Anne
- North
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast
- Southwest

June 29, 2007

Mayor Greg Nickels  
City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> floor  
PO Box 94749  
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

RE: 2008 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Dear Mayor Nickels:

Continuing in the advisory role assigned by City legislation to the City Neighborhood Council and the thirteen District Councils in development of the City budget, and based on an extensive process of consultation with and among the district councils, the City Neighborhood Council offers the following suggestions as you develop budget proposals for 2008.

Public Safety. We support continuing efforts to increase the number of sworn Seattle Police Department uniformed positions. Increases must be on a net basis, thus taking attrition into account. While supporting the efforts of the “geo-policing” strategy to deploy the officers most efficiently, we do not feel that these improvements will be enough without a substantial net increase in positions. Several district councils have expressed concerns about the shifting of crime “hot spots” to areas currently assigned only one or two officers; they stress the need to continue strong police presence in former high incidence areas.

We stand behind our request of recent years to explore ways to fund additional positions for beat, bicycle, and foot patrols; to restore Community Service Officers to previous staffing levels of one per sector and to restore the Crime Prevention Coordinators and their administrative support to re-establish and strengthen block watch and emergency preparedness. Also, we continue with our 2006 request for an increase in City Attorney liaison positions to the Police Department so that each precinct has at least one such position.

Health, Human Services, and Housing Recent years' cuts in the City's health and human services have hurt the most vulnerable, and we support increasing these funds. We recommend additional housing units and for services to help the homeless, the disabled, and displaced veterans back into stable jobs and off the streets. Funding should ensure that subsidized housing and related services are not unduly concentrated in any particular area of the city. The City should also invest more in its proactive rental housing inspection program.

Neighborhood Matching Fund. We strongly urge an increase by at least \$500,000 in the Neighborhood Matching Fund, which has not fully recovered from the cuts that were made several years ago. Excellent projects are going unfunded or under funded. The Neighborhood Matching Fund helps keep Seattle's neighborhoods livable, and by leveraging private dollars and volunteer hours, it brings double value to the City.

Neighborhood Service Centers. Throughout the city, the Neighborhood Service Centers and their staffs are essential resources for empowering citizens, businesses, and the district councils. CNC strongly believes that the funds for these offices and their staffs should be retained and, where possible, increased.

Neighborhood Planning. We request that assistance for neighborhood planning and implementation through the Department of Neighborhoods be re-instated, or that a similar magnitude of funds be provided through the Department of Planning and Development budget to help support stewardship groups in implementing and updating their neighborhood plans, and to assist neighborhoods that do not have a neighborhood plan but would like one. As was done in the development of the current neighborhood plans, some funds should be provided directly to neighborhood planning and steward groups so they can hire their own consultants and do their own outreach. Doing so empowers the community, and the plans that result are better, more widely supported, and more cost-effective than if these functions are performed exclusively by City employees.

Demographic and research services. For the last several years, the City Neighborhood Council has unsuccessfully urged replacement of the services that were lost when the City Demographer position was eliminated from the Department of Planning and Development. This situation was worsened by last year's elimination of a Department of Neighborhoods research position. In order for neighborhoods to respond to the emergence of diverse new groups, they need census breakdowns. The City provided neighborhood-by-neighborhood census breakdowns from the 1980 and 1990 censuses, but still has not done so for the 2000 census.

Drainage infrastructure. A recent flood fatality and other dangerous situations facing people in their homes and businesses demand greater City investment in better drainage. The City should carefully assess the adequacy of its drainage network, and act quickly to make the needed improvements.

Street condition and maintenance. The budgets and work plans for carrying out the 2006 Bridging the Gap transportation levy include no funding for non-arterial street maintenance, contrary to the recommendations of the City Neighborhood Council and SDOT's Citizen Technical Advisory Committee II. According to the figures that the City Council received from SDOT last summer, non-arterial streets represent 42 percent of the maintenance backlog, or \$342 million. Neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas cannot tolerate continued deterioration of these non-arterial streets. Thus we urge that the 2008 budget include funds specifically for evaluating and rebuilding non-arterial streets.

Arterial streets and bridges, too, will not benefit as much as they should from the current restoration unless damage is reduced from vehicles that are heavier than the state standard of 20,000 pounds per axle. The only vehicles normally allowed to exceed that limit are solid waste trucks and transit buses. The waste disposal contract (now in negotiation) should include incentives to discourage City haulers from using a state exemption that allows their trucks to exceed that weight. The City should also work to ensure that new King County Metro buses do not substantially exceed that weight, or that the City will receive reimbursement for the damage done to its roads and bridges.

Parks acquisition, improvement and maintenance. With next year's ending of the parks levy, the funds must be found for new parks and to improve the current ones. Modest increases have not fully restored parks maintenance funding, urban forestry, community center staffing, and youth programming from the cuts of several years ago.

Library. Public library hours and book-buying budgets have also suffered in recent years. We support increasing the hours when libraries are open, and we also support increasing the book-buying budget.

Economic development. While promotion of large and "small" (up to 500 employees!) businesses has its place, these businesses cause more displacement of existing homes and businesses than "micro businesses" that fit better into the urban fabric. Seattle's economic development efforts should do more to protect and promote micro businesses.

Video access to boards and commissions. Seattle Channel coverage of City boards and commissions has declined in recent years. Improved infrastructure would make

it easier to broadcast or web cast more of these meetings. Cameras, microphones, and portable audio mixers are needed for loan to boards and commissions whose volunteers can operate them for web casts. We also recommend that electronics and wiring be installed to connect the Seattle Channel studio for live or recorded coverage of meetings in the 40<sup>th</sup> floor meeting rooms of Municipal Tower and in the Board Room of Parks Department headquarters.

Conclusion. Thanks for your consideration of the above recommendations. This letter was distributed in draft to the district councils and revised and adopted at the June 25, 2007 City Neighborhood Council meeting.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Chris Leman  
Chair, CNC

cc: District Councils  
City Councilmembers