

Office of Planning and Community Development

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Department Overview

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) was established in December 2015 with a mission of strengthening citywide planning and implementation and ensuring City departments are aligned and coordinated in planning for Seattle’s future development. OPCD coordinates City departments to ensure that development decisions and investments advance equitable growth, consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. The department is guided by its vision of “an inspiring city, in harmony with nature, where everyone thrives.” In addition to partnering with other City departments, OPCD works closely with community partners and other agencies to implement that vision. During the last five years, OPCD has accomplished a wide range of projects, including annual amendments to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, implementation of legislation to make it easier for property owners to create accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and develop affordable housing; development of new Design Guidelines in six neighborhoods; 130th Street and 145th Street station area planning; industrial and maritime strategy planning; funding 63 community-initiated projects to combat displacement and increase access to opportunity through the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI); and numerous other items.

The director of OPCD serves in the Mayor's various subcabinets to facilitate coordinated decision-making to address policies and investments that support Seattle's BIPOC communities. OPCD works with the Mayor's Office and members of the cabinet to ensure the City's investments support community development objectives and that department priorities are aligned and reflected in policies and budget resources.

OPCD is organized in four divisions: Equitable Development, Long Range Planning, Community Planning, and Land Use Policy. OPCD also has a small urban design group and an Indigenous Planner that work across divisions. OPCD houses two independent commissions: the Seattle Design Commission and the Seattle Planning Commission. OPCD also staffs the Equitable Development Initiative Advisory Board.

Budget Snapshot

	2022 Actuals	2023 Adopted	2024 Endorsed	2024 Adopted
Department Support				
General Fund Support	22,642,334	8,874,207	8,771,050	7,777,792
Other Funding - Operating	2,182,463	26,393,216	26,306,732	28,113,430
Total Operations	24,824,798	35,267,423	35,077,782	35,891,222
Total Appropriations	24,824,798	35,267,423	35,077,782	35,891,222
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	48.50	49.50	49.50	51.50

* 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

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2024 Budget	FTE
Total 2024 Endorsed Budget	35,077,782	49.50
Baseline		
Central Cost Manual Baseline Adjustment	-	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(28,517)	-
Remove Comprehensive Plan Funding from Baseline	(130,000)	-
Proposed Operating		
Short-term Staffing for Economic Revitalization Initiatives	169,790	1.00
Increase Equitable Development Initiative Grant Awards with Short-Term Rental Tax	585,000	-
Equitable Development Initiative Finance Staffing	149,816	1.00
Shift Funding Support for EDI Staffing	-	-
Proposed Technical		
	-	-
Council		
Comprehensive Plan Update	130,000	-
SCERS Contribution Rate Change	(62,650)	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$813,439	2.00
Total 2024 Adopted Budget	\$35,891,222	51.50

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Central Cost Manual Baseline Adjustment

Expenditures -

This budget-neutral adjustment aligns OPCD's baseline budget with the 2024 Endorsed Central Cost Manual.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(28,517)

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

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department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Remove Comprehensive Plan Funding from Baseline

Expenditures \$(130,000)

This item removes \$130,000 that was added in the 2021 Adopted Budget for the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan major update. The major update was funded in the 2021-2023 budgets through a combination of funding allocations. This budget item remained in OPCD's baseline budget for two additional years to help meet the project's total funding needs. In 2024, the EIS and outreach work will be nearly complete, OPCD will release the final plan for adoption, and the department will begin work on related legislative updates.

Proposed Operating

Short-term Staffing for Economic Revitalization Initiatives

Expenditures \$169,790

Position Allocation 1.00

The City's 2024 Adopted Mid-Biennial Budget Adjustments appropriate approximately \$330 million in JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax (payroll tax) proceeds, of which \$34 million is allocated to investments promoting economic revitalization. The Downtown Activation Plan (DAP), announced in June 2023, outlines the Mayor's plan to revitalize and transform Downtown Seattle as the city continues to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The DAP details a suite of legislative and regulatory actions and program investments to be undertaken with the goal of making Seattle's downtown a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient hub for residents, workers, and visitors. This item provides a 2-year Strategic Advisor 1 position to provide additional planning staff capacity related to the downtown activation plan and downtown planning functions. OPCD's planners are anticipating unprecedented workload demands in 2024 as they work on the Downtown Subarea Plan, the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan, light rail station area planning, and other items. This item provides critical capacity for downtown planning and recovery efforts.

Increase Equitable Development Initiative Grant Awards with Short-Term Rental Tax

Expenditures \$585,000

The August 2023 revenue forecast projects higher Short-Term Rental Tax (STRT) revenues than were projected when the 2024 Endorsed Budget was developed. This item provides additional support for Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) grants. This action brings total STRT EDI grant funding to \$5 million. This item is consistent with Ordinance 125872, which indicates that \$5 million of STRT should be allocated to EDI grants.

Equitable Development Initiative Finance Staffing

Expenditures \$149,816

Position Allocation 1.00

This item provides one Senior Finance Analyst to address capacity needs in supporting the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI). This new finance staff person will support the EDI division; track EDI awards and improve tracking and reporting systems; provide technical assistance and trainings for EDI staff; provide support for internal staff on grant and contract management; and may provide technical support for external community partners. This item is funded with Short-Term Rental Tax (STRT). Per Ordinance 125872, \$1.069 million of STRT should be allocated to support EDI administration and project management.

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Shift Funding Support for EDI Staffing

Expenditures -

This ongoing item shifts \$800,000 of Equitable Development staffing and other costs from the General Fund to Short-Term Rental Tax to relieve pressure on the General Fund given the growth in resources available to the Equitable Development Initiative.

Council

Comprehensive Plan Update

Expenditures \$130,000

This item adds \$130,000 of one-time JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax ("payroll tax") funding for community engagement work related to the Seattle Comprehensive Plan major update and legislation to implement recommendations from the major update. Release of the Draft Comprehensive Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) have been delayed and most outreach and engagement related to these items will occur in 2024. This item is funded from the economic revitalization and workforce development allocation of the payroll tax.

SCERS Contribution Rate Change

Expenditures \$(62,650)

The City's employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS), of which most non-uniformed City employees are members, is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings.

The employer portion of the SCERS contribution is funded through the annual budget process as a percentage of salaries based on several factors including reports from the contracted actuary and the City's long-range financial forecasts. The Mayor's 2024 Proposed Mid-Biennial Budget included an employer contribution rate of 16.22%, which was determined prior to the actuary's recommendation but provided for long-term "smoothing" given the City's long-term financial challenges.

This item reduces the employer contribution rate from the proposed rate of 16.22% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 15.17%, which was determined to provide sufficient funding to the retirement system to achieve 100% funded status by 2042.

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2023-24 Mid-Biennium Adopted Budget Updates - Expenses

Budget Summary Level	Fund	Budget Process Phase Endorsed	Adopted Changes	Grand Total
Design Commission	30010 - REET I Capital Fund	691,581	-6,777	684,804
Design Commission Total		691,581	-6,777	684,804
Equitable Development Initiative	00100 - General Fund	564,948	-134,948	430,000
	12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	4,415,000	719,948	5,134,948
	14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	19,755,643	0	19,755,643
Equitable Development Initiative Total		24,735,591	585,000	25,320,591
Planning and Community Development	00100 - General Fund	8,206,102	-858,311	7,347,792
	00164 - Unrestricted Cumulative Reserve Fund	0	0	0
	12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	0	808,970	808,970
	14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	1,444,508	284,556	1,729,064
Planning and Community Development Total		9,650,610	235,216	9,885,826
Grand Total		35,077,782	813,439	35,891,222