Readers Guide

This reader's guide describes the structure of the 2006 Adopted Budget and outlines its contents. It is designed to help citizens, media, and City officials more easily understand and participate in budget deliberations. In an effort to focus on what is achieved through spending, the 2006 Adopted Budget includes funding levels and expected program outcomes, taking into consideration the current economic situation.

A companion document, the 2006-2011 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP), identifies adopted expenditures and fund sources associated with the development and rehabilitation of major City facilities, such as streets, parks, utilities, and buildings, over the coming six years. The CIP also shows the City's financial contribution to projects owned and operated by other jurisdictions or institutions. The CIP fulfills the budgeting and financing requirements of the Capital Facilities Element of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed information on the capacity impact of new and improved capital facilities.

Seattle budgets on a modified biennial basis. See the "Budget Process" section for details.

The 2006 Adopted Budget

This document is a detailed record of the spending plan adopted for 2006. It contains the following elements:

- Selected Financial Policies – a description of the policies that govern the City's approach to revenue estimation, debt management, expenditure projections, maintenance of fund balances, and other financial responsibilities;
- Budget Process – a description of the processes by which the 2006 Adopted Budget and 2006-2011 Adopted Capital Improvement Program were developed;
- Summary Tables – a set of tables that inventory and sum up expected revenues and planned spending for 2006;
- General Subfund Revenue Overview – a narrative describing the City's General Subfund revenues, or those revenues available to support general government purposes, and the factors affecting the level of resources available to support City spending;
- Departmental Budgets – City department-level descriptions of significant policy and program changes from the 2006 Endorsed Budget, the services provided, and the spending levels adopted to attain these results;
- Position List – a list of authorized positions by department;
- Cost Allocation – a summary of cost-allocation factors for internal City services; and
- Appendix – an array of supporting documents including a glossary and Citywide statistics.

Departmental Budgets: A Closer Look

The budget presentations for individual City departments (including offices, boards, and commissions) constitute the heart of this document. They are organized alphabetically within seven functional clusters:

- Arts, Culture, & Recreation;

- Health & Human Services;
- Neighborhoods & Development;
- Public Safety;
- Utilities & Transportation;
- Administration; and
- Funds, Subfunds, and Other.

Each cluster, with the exception of the last, comprises several departments sharing a related functional focus, as shown on the organizational chart following this reader's guide. Departments are composed of one or more budget control levels, which in turn may be composed of one or more programs. Budget control levels are the level at which the City Council makes appropriations.

The cluster "Funds, Subfunds, and Other" comprises General Fund Subfunds that do not appear in the context of department chapters, including the General Subfund Fund Table, General Subfund Revenue Table, Cumulative Reserve Subfund, Emergency Subfund, Judgment and Claims Subfund, the Municipal Civic Center Fund, and Parking Garage Fund. A summary of the City's General Obligation debt is also included in this section.

As indicated, the Adopted Budget appropriations are presented in this document by department, budget control level, and program. At the department level, the reader will also see references to the underlying fund sources (General Subfund and Other) for the department's budgeted resources. The City accounts for all of its revenues and expenditures according to a system of funds and subfunds. In general, funds or subfunds are established to account for specific revenues and permitted expenditures associated with those revenues. For example, the City's share of Motor Vehicle Fuel taxes must be spent on road-related transportation activities and projects, and are accounted for in two separate subfunds in the Transportation Operating Fund. Other revenues without statutory restrictions, such as sales and property taxes, are available for general purposes and are accounted for in the City's General Subfund. For many departments, such as the Seattle Department of Transportation, several funds and subfunds, including the General Subfund, provide the resources and account for the expenditures of the department. For several other departments, the General Subfund is the sole source of available resources.

Budget Presentations

Most department-level budget presentations begin with information on how to contact the department, as well as a description of the department's basic functions and areas of responsibility. There follows a narrative summary of the major policy and program changes describing how the department plans to conduct its business in light of the adopted budget. When appropriate, subsequent sections present budget control level and program level purpose statements, and program summaries detailing significant program changes from the 2006 Endorsed Budget to the 2006 Adopted Budget.

All department, budget control, and program level budget presentations include a table summarizing historical and adopted expenditures, as well as endorsed and adopted appropriations for 2006. The actual historical expenditures are displayed for informational purposes only.

Information on the number of staff positions to be funded under the Adopted Budget appears at each of the three levels of detail: department, budget control, and program. These figures refer to regular, permanent staff positions (as opposed to temporary or intermittent positions) and are expressed in terms of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs). Changes are shown at the program level and are subsequently added to, or subtracted from, the number of positions active in the prior year to indicate the total number of employees to serve the department in the upcoming year.

Where relevant, departmental sections close with additional pieces of information: a statement of actual or projected revenues for the years 2004 through 2006; a statement of fund balance; and a statement of 2006 appropriations to support capital projects appearing in the 2006-2011 CIP. Explicit discussions of the operating and maintenance costs associated with new capital expenditures appear in the 2006-2011 Adopted Capital Improvement Program document.

City Organizational Chart