

Seattle Channel

2025 – 2026 Proposed Budget Policy Considerations

Select Budget Committee | October 17, 2024

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Policy Consideration

1. Programming & Staffing Reductions

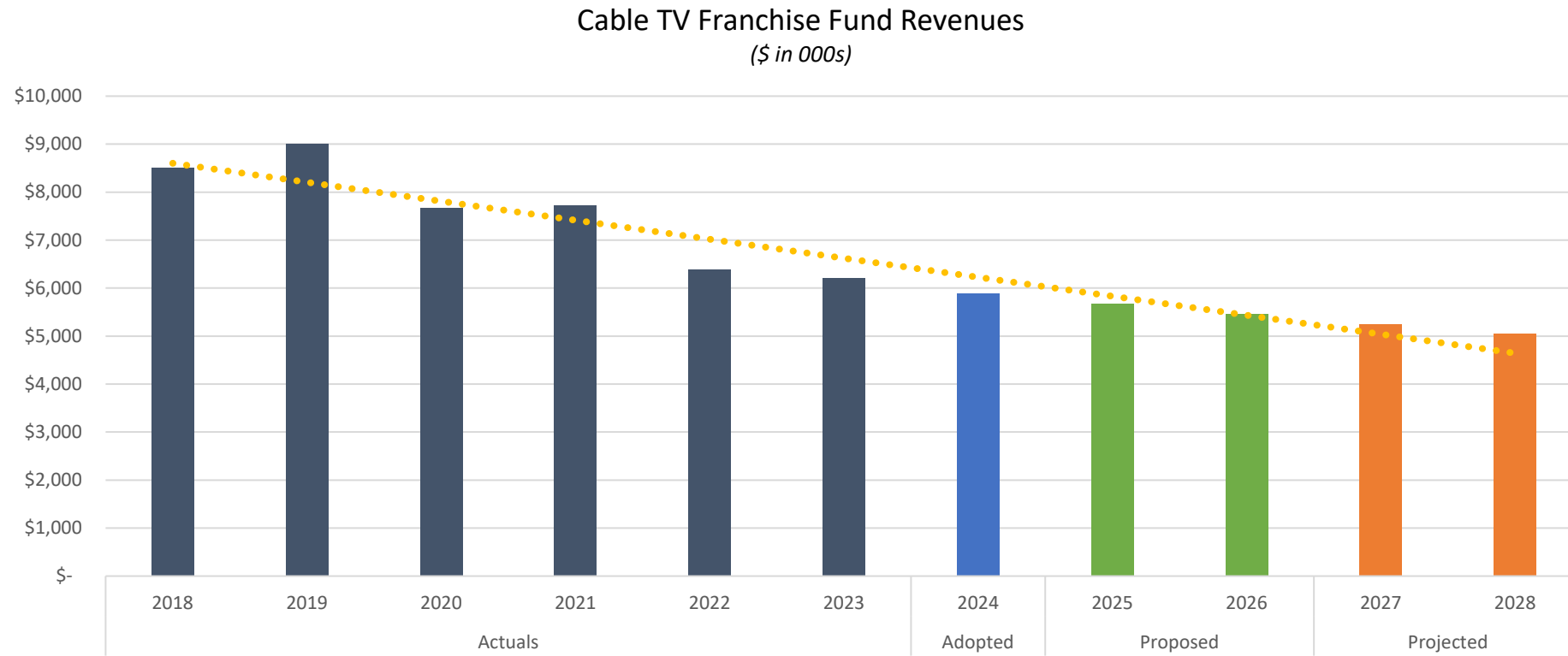
Seattle Channel is funded by revenues raised from franchise fees on cable providers' gross revenues.

Funds are deposited into the Cable TV Franchise Fund and may be used for:

- a) Administration of the Cable Customer Bill of Rights and costs the City is obligated to fund under the terms of its franchise agreements
- b) Operating and capital support for the Seattle Channel
- c) Programs and projects that promote technology literacy and access
- d) Interactive technology to provide ways for residents to access City services

Policy Consideration

Cable franchise revenues have been declining for many years, likely due to customers switching away from traditional cable television service



Policy Consideration

- 2025-2026 Proposed Budget would reduce Seattle Channel's budget by \$1.6 million and 6.0 FTE (7 City employees impacted)
- Elimination of all non-governmental programming – including City Inside/Out, CityStream, Art Zone with Nancy Guppy, and Book Lust with Nancy Pearl – and related contracts and work arrangements with outside producers, hosts, and crews
- Remaining programming would consist of basic City Council and Executive coverage
- Proposed budget also zeros out a Capital Improvement Program project used to maintain, replace, and upgrade production systems – approx. \$372,000

Policy Consideration

Options:

- A. Full Restoration – To restore to current operating levels, the Council would need to add \$1.6 million and 6.0 FTE in 2025, and \$1.65 million in 2026. To restore the capital project, the Council would need to add \$372,000 in 2025; \$384,000 in 2026.
- B. Partial Restoration – The Council could restore some of the staffing and funding; there are logical groupings for restoration. For example, one option would be to add \$920,000 and 4.0 FTE to continue approx. 50% of the non-governmental programming. Other options may be possible.
- C. Explore Alternative Models – The Executive has indicated that staff are exploring new revenue and partnership models. In addition to other options, the Council could request the Executive to provide a report in 2025 on its findings and conclusions on the feasibility of other operating models.
- D. No Change

Questions?