

Department of Neighborhoods (DON)

Staff: Lish Whitson

Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)

	2020 Adopted	2021 Proposed	% Change
Appropriations by BSL			
Operating			
Leadership and Administration	\$4,304	\$5,176	20.3%
Community Building	\$9,378	\$5,887	(37.2%)
Community Grants/Neighborhood Matching Fund ¹	\$4,244	\$4,977	17.3%
Total Appropriations²	\$17,927	\$16,039	(10.5%)
Total FTEs	65.0	63.0	(3.1%)
Revenues			
General Fund	14,702	14,566	(0.9%)
Other Sources	3,225	1,473	(54.3%)
Total Revenues	17,927	16,039	(10.5%)

¹ The “Neighborhood Matching Fund” BSL would be renamed the “Community Grants” BSL in the 2021 Proposed Budget.

² Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

I. Background

The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) provides outreach and engagement, community building, and community grants programs to build community and better connect City government with community. The DON budget is divided into three lines of business: community grants, community building, and leadership and administration. Overall, the DON budget is cut by 10.5% and the Department will lose a net two positions.

Community Grants. The 2021 budget renames the “Neighborhood Matching Fund” BSL “Community Grants.” Funding for the BSL increases 17% over 2020 funding. This increase is primarily due to transfers into the BSL from other parts of the Department and the largest programs within the BSL will receive less funds than was budgeted in 2020. The Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) is cut by \$830,000, equivalent to approximately one third of grant funding budgeted in 2020.

Funding in the BSL is increased through the addition of the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund (\$250,000) and Find It Fix It funds (\$30,000) from the Community Building BSL to the Community Grants BSL. The Healthy Food Fund (HFF), a new grant program that was budgeted at \$2.5 million from the Sweetened Beverage Tax (SBT) in 2020, but had its funding redirected to address COVID needs, is budgeted at \$1.5 million from the SBT in 2021. Two vacant HFF positions would be eliminated and existing NMF staff would be paid through the HFF to manage it. Without transfers of the three grant programs, the Community Grants BSL would have dropped 25 percent to \$3.2

million and funding in the Community Building BSL would have decreased 18 percent to \$7.7 million.

Community Building. The 2021 Proposed Budget would cut about 32 percent of funding for this line of business compared to the 2020 Adopted Budget. Primarily, these reductions are a result of interdepartmental transfers of programs into the Community Building and Leadership and Administration BSLs and \$1.1 million of one-time expenditures included in the 2020 budget that would not be funded in 2021. The reductions also include the elimination of a recently vacated position that managed the PACE program (\$129,000), which educates community members on how to become civic leaders and engage with City government. In addition, positions in the Major Institutions and Historic Preservation programs would be funded as part time cutting \$88,655 from the BSL. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) would pay DON \$127,395 to cover the costs for one outreach and engagement specialist who would support SPU projects and programs. The community building budget is increased through permanent funding from the General Fund for the Rainier Beach: A Safe Place for Youth program (\$518,000) and the addition of \$360,000 to lease space for a community-based organization. This lease is included in the 3rd Quarter supplemental budget and would continue into 2021. A Strategic Advisor position for Census outreach and engagement is made permanent at \$155,000. The BSL also includes \$55,000 for the Seattle Together program, which would be jointly funded with the Office of Arts and Culture. Leadership and Administration. Increases in the Leadership and Administration BSL reflect standard cost increases and increased personnel costs across the Department, including costs to increase two part time administrative positions to full time positions.

II. Issue Identification

1. Census Outreach and Engagement

In 2018, the Council added a term-limited position to DON to support participation in the 2020 U.S. Census. Authority and funding for that position would run out at the end of 2020. The 2021 Proposed Budget includes \$155,000 and a permanent Strategic Advisor position in DON to continue the position.

The Census outreach coordinator worked with community-based organizations (CBOs) and Government agencies in 2019 and 2020 in order to increase participation in the U.S. Census. The incumbent has been successful in bringing in grant funding to help offset the costs of the City's Census participation strategy.

In 2021, the intent is to pivot away from encouraging participation in the Census to working with CBOs to understand 2020 Census results as they are released starting in April 2021. This is also a responsibility of the City's Demographer in the Office of Planning and Community Development. The difference between the positions is that the outreach coordinator's role would be focused on outreach and communication to community. The two positions would continue to collaborate on educating internal City and external community stakeholders about the 2020 Census.

The position is also intended to support efforts of community-based organizations to participate in and advocate during redistricting efforts. Washington State's Redistricting Commission will be meeting in 2021 to redistrict State and Federal legislative districts. Seattle's redistricting process is required to start by October 2022. The City Council is required under the Charter to provide financial and other support to a redistricting Commission, who will determine new City Council district boundaries.

The outreach coordinator would also support some of the civic education functions lost with the elimination of the PACE program coordinator position.

Options:

- A. Do not fund the Census outreach position in 2021
- B. Move the position to the Office of Planning and Community Development to work more closely with the City's Demographer
- C. No Action

2. Space for Community Based Organizations

The 2020 3rd Quarter Supplemental Budget includes \$120,000 and the 2021 budget contains \$360,000 that would be used by DON to lease permanent space for Black Lives Matter Seattle/King County (BLMSKC). BLMSKC would use the space to respond to "the disproportionate impacts of COVID19 on Black LGBTQIA, non-binary youth and young adults and other IPOC LGBTQIA and non-binary youth and young adults" by "coordinating wrap-around, and continuation of care set of services and resources to help BIPOC people across the county will ensure these communities do not fall through the gap of care." The funding would flow from DON to the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) who would lease the space on behalf of DON who would then turn over the space to BLMSKC. Under the terms being considered, the lease would require Council approval.

Leasing space for a CBO in exchange for public services identified by that organizations differs significantly from the City's standard practice of putting out a Request for Proposals and choosing an organization to fund based on responses. According to DON, there are likely to be more requests like this for space for CBOs. There is some precedent from the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI), which seeks to support community-based efforts to acquire and develop property. The difference between this proposal and EDI projects is that the goal of EDI is to have CBOs own and control their own space, rather than becoming tenants of City-controlled property. Council may want to consider paying for services rather than leasing space for BLMSKC.

Options:

- A. Redirect funds to pay for contracted services rather than leasing space, most likely through the Human Services Department or Seattle/King County Public Health Department
- B. No Action

3. Healthy Food Fund (HFF)

The 2021 Proposed Budget provides \$1.5 million from the Sweetened Beverage Tax (SBT) for the Healthy Food Fund (HFF), including \$500,000 from the Food Access fund formerly managed by the Human Services Department. HFF is a new grant program that is intended to support community-identified and community-led efforts to increase access to healthy food. Out of these funds, \$1.3 million would be used for grants and the remainder of the funds would be used to pay for staff to manage the grant-making process. These staff are currently working on the NMF, which is being reduced in the 2021 Proposed Budget, and would otherwise be laid off. The SBT Community Advisory Board [recommended](#) funding the Healthy Food Fund at \$1 million in 2021.

The 2020 Adopted Budget included \$2.5 million from the SBT to establish the HFF as a new program in 2020. Those funds were redirected and reused for [grocery vouchers](#) for people in need during the COVID-19 emergency. The grocery voucher funding is continued in the proposed budget until April. The Council may want to consider funding additional vouchers in 2021 instead of starting up the HFF. This could lead to layoffs of two community grants specialists in DON who, under the 2021 Proposed Budget, would be funded through SBT funds in 2021. However, OSE has indicated that they would need additional support in 2021 in order to process these funds and it may be appropriate to use NMF staff to provide this support.

Options:

- A. Fund additional grocery vouchers in 2021, do not fund the Healthy Food Fund
- B. No Action

III. Budget Actions/SLIs Proposed by Councilmembers as of October 8, 2020

1. **South Park Safety Coordinator Add (Councilmember Herbold)** – This proposal would provide \$75,000 in funding in 2021 to DON to continue the work of the South Park Public Safety Coordinator. This position was the top priority recommendation in the 2017 South Park Public Safety Taskforce Report funded by the City Council. The report recommended a bilingual resident to coordinate community public safety efforts in South Park, working with the South Park Safety Partners. The position was funded in the 2020 DON budget.

Current priorities include facilitating community safety dialogue around South Park's experience around policing and alternatives to police in South Park; street and safety concerns due to West Seattle Bridge closure, business district concerns, and youth engagement. Recent work includes coordinating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) work in youth art murals and a Clean Streets Initiative, community support during COVID, neighborhood walks, and facilitating and distributing neighborhood newsletter in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

South Park is a low-income, majority BIPOC neighborhood, with numerous immigrants; a large share of residents speaks a language other than English at home; the median income is 45

percent less than the city average; and 83 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch programs.

Funding options are being explored.

- 2. Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration Funding Proviso (Councilmember Sawant)** – This proposal would place a proviso on the \$32,000 in DON allocated to support Seattle's annual Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration (IPD). The proviso would state that:

"Of the appropriation in the 2021 budget for the Department of Neighborhoods, \$32,000 in the Community Building BSL is appropriated solely to support Seattle's annual Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration (IPD) and for no other purpose. Funds shall be used to contract with an organization with experience organizing IPD celebrations, which is authorized to subcontract with other community-based organizations to fund IPD events such as a march, a community celebration at Daybreak Star, and a celebration at City Hall. These funds shall not be contracted to any organization does not have recent experience organizing IPD celebrations, including celebrations at Seattle City Hall, without the prior authorization of the Seattle City Council."

- 3. Detective Cookie Chess Park (Morales)** – This proposal would add \$200,000 to DON's budget to support the Detective Cookie Chess Park in Rainier Beach. Chess Park is a community driven project to honor the Detective Denise "Cookie" Bouldin chess club. The chess club is an organic neighborhood approach with a trusted community officer to build a better relationship with police officers and the youth in the community. The Chess Park project would create a small public park on underutilized right-of-way where chess would be played outdoors on built-in chess tables and on a giant in-ground chess board.