



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

## Select Budget Committee

### Agenda

Session I at 9:30 a.m. & Session II at 2 p.m.

Monday, October 21, 2024

9:30 AM

Council Chamber, City Hall  
600 4th Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dan Strauss, Chair  
Maritza Rivera, Vice-Chair  
Joy Hollingsworth, Member  
Robert Kettle, Member  
Cathy Moore, Member  
Tammy J. Morales, Member  
Sara Nelson, Member  
Rob Saka, Member  
Tanya Woo, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8806; [Dan.Strauss@seattle.gov](mailto:Dan.Strauss@seattle.gov)

[Watch Council Meetings Live](#) [View Past Council Meetings](#)

Council Chamber Listen Line: 206-684-8566

The City of Seattle encourages everyone to participate in its programs and activities. For disability accommodations, materials in alternate formats, accessibility information, or language interpretation or translation needs, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at 206-684-8888 (TTY Relay 7-1-1), [CityClerk@Seattle.gov](mailto:CityClerk@Seattle.gov), or visit <https://seattle.gov/cityclerk/accommodations> at your earliest opportunity. Providing at least 72-hour notice will help ensure availability; sign language interpreting requests may take longer.



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

## Select Budget Committee

### Agenda

October 21, 2024 - 9:30 AM

Session I at 9:30 a.m. & Session II at 2 p.m.

#### Meeting Location:

Council Chamber, City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

#### Committee Website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/budget>

---

This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.

Only written public comment will be accepted at this meeting. Please submit written comments to all Councilmembers four hours prior to the meeting at [Council@seattle.gov](mailto:Council@seattle.gov) or at Seattle City Hall, Attn: Council Public Comment, 600 4th Ave., Floor 2, Seattle, WA 98104. Business hours are considered 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The deadline is 4:30 p.m. the business day before a meeting with a start time of 9:30 a.m.

*Please Note: Times listed are estimated*

#### Policy Considerations

Central Staff will present analyses related to aspects of the 2025 and 2026 Proposed Budgets, including how the proposed budgets are balanced, and identify initial department-specific policy options for the Select Budget Committee's consideration.

#### Session I - 9:30 a.m.

If time permits during Session I, the Select Budget Committee may discuss Session II agenda items.

#### A. Call To Order

**B. Approval of the Agenda****C. Items of Business****1. Seattle Police Department (SPD)**

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)  
[Central Staff Memo](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenters:** Greg Doss and Ben Noble, Director, Council Central Staff

**2. Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department (CARE)**

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)  
[Central Staff Memo](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenters:** Ann Gorman and Ben Noble, Director, Council Central Staff

**3. Seattle Fire Department (SFD)**

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)  
[Central Staff Memo](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenters:** Ann Gorman and Ben Noble, Director, Council Central Staff

**Session II - 2:00 p.m.**

If time permits during Session I, the Select Budget Committee may discuss Session II agenda items.

**D. Items of Business**

**4. City Attorney's Office (LAW)**

Supporting Documents: [Presentation](#)  
[Central Staff Memo](#)

**Briefing and Discussion**

**Presenters:** Tamaso Johnson and Ben Noble, Director, Council Central Staff

**E. Adjournment**



Legislation Text

---

**File #:** Inf 2583, **Version:** 1

---

Seattle Police Department (SPD)

# SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## 2025 – 2026 Proposed Budget

### Policy Considerations

---

Select Budget Committee | October 21, 2024

Greg Doss, Analyst

Ann Gorman, Analyst

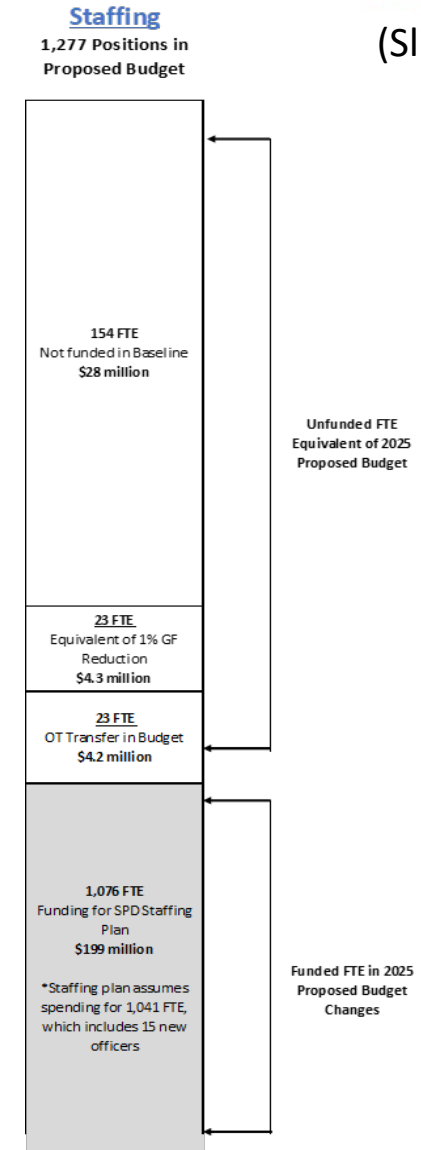
# Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)

BSL	2024 ADOPTED	2025 PROPOSED	% CHANGE	2026 PROPOSED	% CHANGE
Chief of Police	\$14.5M	\$17.0M	17.6%	\$19.0M	11.2%
Collaborative Policing	\$12.6M	\$15.2M	20.5%	\$15.6M	2.6%
Compliance and Professional Standards Bureau	\$5.2M	\$6.0M	16.7%	\$6.1M	1.4%
Criminal Investigations	\$43.0M	\$52.9M	23.1%	\$55.7M	5.3%
East Precinct	\$19.8M	\$21.9M	10.7%	\$22.8M	4.1%
Leadership and Administration	\$95.2M	\$103.3M	8.5%	\$107.6M	4.2%
North Precinct	\$29.6M	\$33.5M	13.2%	\$34.0M	1.6%
Office of Police Accountability	\$5.7M	\$6.8M	19.4%	\$6.9M	1.9%
Patrol Operations	\$13.3M	\$25.6M	92.7%	\$15.9M	(37.6%)
School Zone Camera Program	\$2.2M	\$3.7M	69.9%	\$4.6M	24.6%
South Precinct	\$20.6M	\$23.0M	11.8%	\$23.2M	0.6%
Southwest Precinct	\$15.6M	\$17.3M	10.7%	\$17.2M	(0.5%)
Special Operations	\$63.9M	\$72.0M	12.8%	\$73.6M	2.2%
Technical Services	\$31.0M	\$33.2M	6.9%	\$33.1M	(0.2%)
West Precinct	\$23.7M	\$26.5M	11.5%	\$26.7M	1.0%
Operating Subtotal:	\$395.8M	\$457.9M	15.7%	\$462.1M	0.9%
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>\$395.8M</b>	<b>\$457.9M</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>\$462.1M</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>1,852</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

# Policy Consideration

## 1. Sworn Salary Funding Surplus and 2025 Overtime Deficit

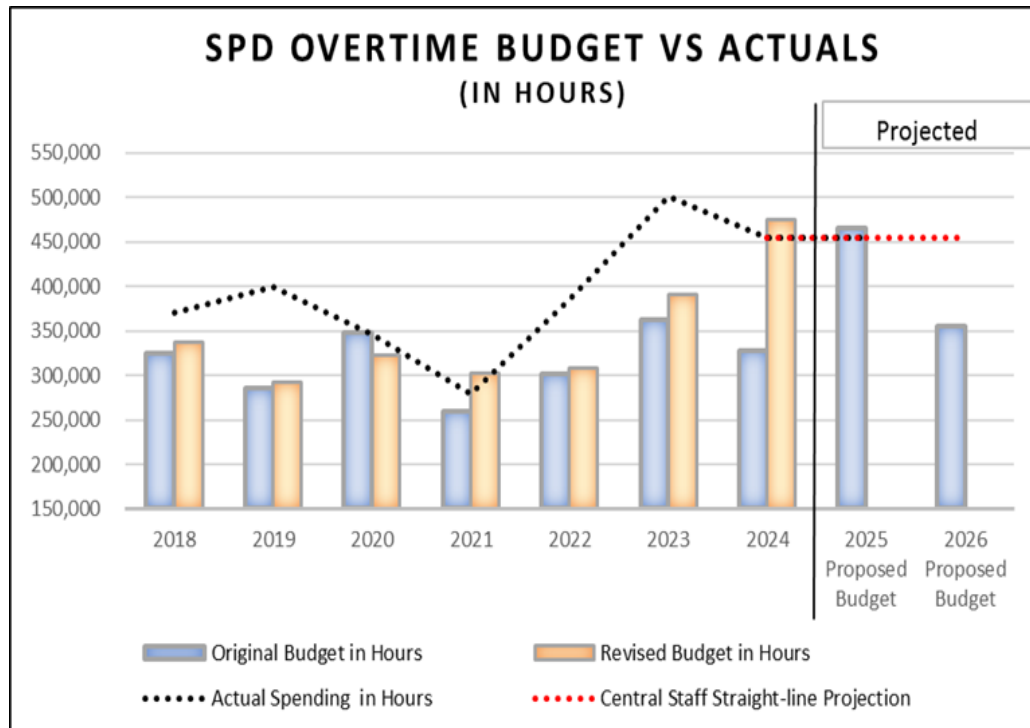
- The department has 1,277 sworn officer positions, but not all of these are funded in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. The base budget funds 1,123 FTE. From there, two adjustments are made:
  - 23 FTE were unfunded to save \$4.3 million in order to achieve a one percent reduction in SPD's General Fund allocation; and
  - An additional 23 FTE were unfunded to make \$4.2 million available for the department's overtime budget.
- Remaining sworn staffing funds support a total of 1,076 FTE.
- SPD will need 1,041 Funded FTE to support all of its recruit and sworn positions in 2025, and to hire 15 additional officers above attrition.
- The amount funded above the 1,041 needed is 35 FTE and approximates \$6.5 million in each year of the biennium.





# Policy Consideration

## 1. Sworn Salary Funding Surplus and 2025 Overtime Deficit (cont.)



- The 2025-2026 Proposed Budget would add \$10 million to continue funding overtime in 2025 at a level that approximates projected spending in 2024. This \$10 million is not ongoing into 2026, which would require SPD to severely curtail its overtime spending, or the Executive and Council would need to add more funding in 2026.
- The 2025-2026 Proposed Budget contains a \$165,000 reduction to the Office of Police Accountability (OPA) overtime budget. OPA staff have indicated that while the reduction represents a two-thirds cut to its overtime budget, which is part of the larger agency-wide overtime budget, the addition of 2.0 FTE civilian investigators in OPA will reduce total overtime hours worked.

# Policy Consideration

## 1. Sworn Salary Funding Surplus and 2025 Overtime Deficit (cont.)

Central Staff has concluded that (1) SPD's sworn staffing plan is likely overfunded by \$6.5 million in both years of the biennium; and (2) SPD's overtime budget is likely underfunded by \$10 million in 2026.

### **Options:**

- A. Reduce from the SPD sworn salary budget up to \$6.5 million in 2025 and \$6.5 million in 2026.
- B. Add to the SPD overtime budget \$10 million in 2026.
- C. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent that (1) recognizes OPA's overtime budget as part of SPD's department-wide, overtime budget; and (2) encourages OPA to use as much overtime as is necessary to pursue and complete investigations within contractual timelines.
- D. Some combination of A, B, and/or C
- E. No change.

# Policy Consideration

## 2. Parking Enforcement Officers

- Since 2020, the PEO unit has been operating with approximately 20 vacancies, out of 104 PEO positions.
- Department leadership has indicated that issues in SPD’s hiring process may be contributing to the vacancy problem. SPD has created a workgroup to identify potential solutions to the process heavy and time-intensive hiring procedures.
- The PEO unit’s capacity to train new PEOs is currently limiting the number of candidates that can be sent through SPD’s backgrounding process.

*Table 1. PEO Hiring Timeline*

	Est. Start Date	Est. End Date
1. Job Posting	8/15/2023	9/5/2023
2. Written Exam	9/16/2023	9/16/2023
3. Interviews	9/25/2023	9/30/2023
4. Fitness Assessment	10/14/2023	10/14/2023
5. Candidates input eSOPH background system	10/19/2023	11/2/2023
6. Background	11/3/2023	12/7/2023
7. Class Start	1/3/2024	3/1/2024

# Policy Consideration

## 2. Parking Enforcement Officers (cont.)

The Department efforts to fill PEO vacancies are not succeeding. The Council may wish to provide additional oversight and/or more resources to SPD to: (1) ensure that city's PEO hiring processes are streamlined; and (2) ensure that the PEO unit's training capacity does not continue to limit the number of candidates that might otherwise be hired.

### **Options:**

- A. Create a Statement of Legislative Intent that requests that the Executive submit to the Council a report showing how SPD proposes to streamline the hiring process, and notes other changes that might be made to attract and retain PEOs.
- B. Add 2.0 FTE PEO Supervisor positions and create a Statement of Legislative Intent that requests that the positions be funded in 2025 and 2026 by salary savings that are created from current PEO vacancies. The annual cost of 1.0 FTE PEO Supervisor position is \$143,000.
- C. Option A + Option B
- D. No change.

# Policy Consideration

## 3. SPD's 30x30 Initiative

The Council may wish to add staff and/or to direct investments that would align with the Initiative and reflect the priorities of the internal workgroup. Council may also wish to express support for funding SPD's current childcare and work-schedule focus areas.

### **Options:**

- A. Add a staff member in SPD to document, coordinate, and monitor all department work related to the 30x30 Initiative, including development of Council-requested reports and an ongoing 30x30 Program funding request that could be added in a mid-year supplemental budget.
- B. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that SPD prepare a timeline for a future implementation of flexible work schedules and flexible round-the-clock childcare for sworn personnel and an impact analysis of such implementation.
- C. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent that expresses support for flexible round-the-clock childcare or flexible work schedules or both at SPD, particularly in terms of how any new offering would align with the 30x30 Initiative.
- D. Some combination of A, B, and C.
- A. No change

# Questions?

2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET  
**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS PAPER**

**SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT NAME (SPD)**

Central Staff Analysts: Greg Doss and Ann Gorman

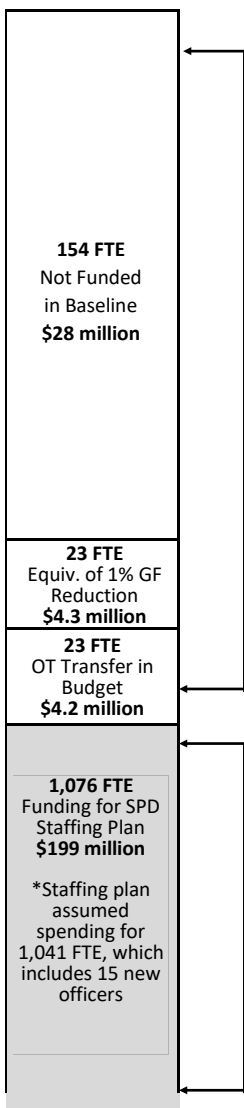
This paper highlights selected policy considerations related to the Seattle Police Department’s (SPD’s) 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. Considerations included here are not intended to be exhaustive and others may surface as Central Staff continues its analysis of the proposed budget. For more information about SPD’s 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, please see the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Overview Papers.

**Policy Considerations**

**1. Sworn Salary Funding Surplus and 2025 Overtime Deficit**

**Staffing**

1,277 Positions in Proposed Budget



**Creating the 2025-2026 Sworn Salary Budget**

The Department has 1,277 sworn officer positions, but at present many of these positions are unfilled. Facing constraints posed by the City’s General Fund budget deficit, recent officer wage increases, and the Department’s need to fund overtime to provide an appropriate level of service, SPD used the following logic to build its proposed sworn salary budget:

SPD’s baseline budget funded 1,123 positions. From there, two policy adjustments were made:

- 23 FTE were unfunded to save \$4.3 million in order to achieve a one percent reduction in SPD’s General Fund allocation; and
- An additional 23 FTE were unfunded to make \$4.2 million available for the department’s overtime budget.

The remaining funding is sufficient to support a total of 1,076 FTE. This level of funding is not actually consistent with the staffing levels now anticipated in 2025.

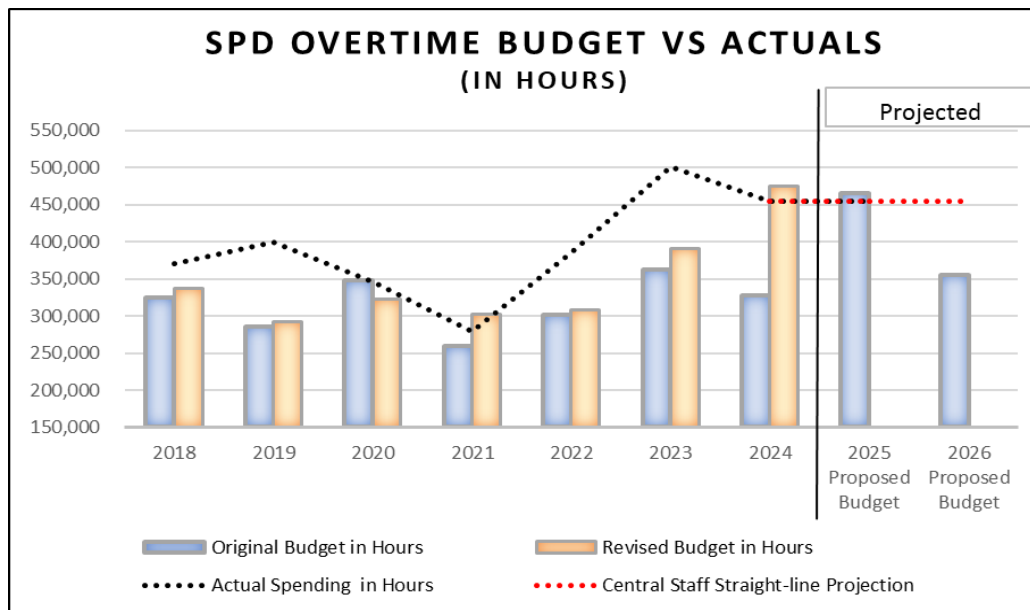
In particular, City Budget Office (CBO) and SPD staff have indicated that SPD will need 1,041 Funded FTE to support all of its recruit and sworn positions in 2025, and to hire an additional 15 officers above attrition. The difference between what is funded (1,076 FTE), and what is needed for existing staff and 15 net new hires (1,041 FTE) is a total of 35 FTE and approximates \$6.5 million in salary savings. This salary saving is currently unprogrammed in SPD’s budget and is available for any other use, including for unplanned, unbudgeted overtime expenses or for additional sworn officer hires, beyond the 15 net new hires that already are funded in 2025. The 2026 Staffing Plan is overbudgeted by \$6.5 million for the same underlying reason.

## Creating the 2025-2026 Overtime Budget

### Overtime

SPD staff indicate that ongoing officer shortages have required the department to rely on overtime to deliver essential public safety services, and that spending on emphasis patrols and patrol augmentation will exceed the \$37.8 million allocated in the department's 2024 Adopted Budget.<sup>1</sup> In order to align overtime spending with the required funding, the Executive has requested an additional \$12.8 million in the 2024 Year-End Supplemental Budget Ordinance. If authorized by the Council, this add would bring SPD's 2024 overtime budget to \$54.2 million. SPD is on track to use between 455k and 475k overtime hours in 2024, which represents a 5-10 percent decrease from 2023.

Chart 1. Overtime Budget vs. Actuals History



The 2025-2026 Proposed Budget would add \$10 million to continue funding overtime in 2025 at a level that approximates projected spending in 2024. Notable is that the \$10 million add in 2025 does not continue into 2026, which means that SPD would have to severely curtail its overtime spending, or the Executive and Council would need to add more funding in 2026.

Also notable in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget is a \$165,000 reduction to the Office of Police Accountability (OPA) overtime budget, which was made to fulfill an overall General Fund reduction target. OPA staff have indicated that while the reduction represents a two-thirds cut to its overtime budget, which is part of the larger agency-wide overtime budget, the addition of 2.0 FTE civilian investigators in OPA will reduce total overtime hours worked. Additionally, the overtime reduction is not inconsistent with spending in 2023 and year-to-date 2024.

<sup>1</sup> Not all of this spending represents an increase in the use of officer overtime hours. Some of the spending is driven by an increase in per-hour overtime rates as adjusted in [Ordinance 127067](#), which appropriated \$3.7 million to cover wage and overtime adjustments for the Seattle Police Officer's Guild (SPOG) Interim Agreement.



Central Staff has concluded that (1) SPD's sworn staffing plan is likely overfunded by \$6.5 million in both years of the biennium; and (2) SPD's overtime budget is likely underfunded by \$10 million in 2026.

**Options:**

- A. Reduce from the SPD sworn salary budget up to \$6.5 million in 2025 and \$6.5 million in 2026.
- B. Add to the SPD overtime budget \$10 million in 2026.
- C. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent that (1) recognizes OPA's overtime budget as part of SPD's department-wide, overtime budget; and (2) encourages OPA to use as much overtime as is necessary to pursue and complete investigations within contractual timelines.
- D. Some combination of A, B, and/or C
- E. No change.

**2. Parking Enforcement Officers**

The Parking Enforcement unit is made up of a Parking Enforcement Manager and two Parking Enforcement Operations Managers. In recent years, the City has had difficulty staffing this unit. The PEO unit was located in the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) from 2021 to 2023, where SDOT held vacant 20 positions to produce salary savings that was repurposed to cover SDOT overhead expenses. The City transferred the unit back to SPD in 2023 with an expectation that SPD would fully staff the unit. Unfortunately, the department has not been able to reach full staffing and the unit has been carrying 19 vacancies since it was relocated to SPD.

The PEO vacancy problem is creating at least two issues for the City: (1) SPD is providing a lower level of service when managing the right-of-way, enforcing parking regulations, providing traffic control for events and incidents, and performing other related activities; and (2) the City is not taking full advantage of recent changes that allow PEOs to staff special events in place of sworn officers.

In December 2023, the Council passed [ORD. 120720](#), which authorized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG) that provides until January 2026 additional flexibility for the City to use limited commission and non-commission employees to fill special event assignments. While the MOU is in force, SPD may create staffing plans that expand its use of PEOs by filling posts that might otherwise be filled with SPOG members, where legally allowable and within public safety constraints.

PEO Hiring Challenges: Department leadership have indicated that issues in SPD's hiring process may be contributing to the vacancy problem, and have provided the following information:

### Backgrounding and Testing

Executive staff have indicated that a large number of candidates are lost to the backgrounding and testing processes. As an example: in the April 2024 hiring cycle, only 2 out of 123 applicants made it to the training phase.<sup>2</sup> While backgrounding and testing are potential obstacles to applicants, they cannot be eliminated because they are essential to screening candidate quality. The PEO unit has observed that many candidates fail to meet the expectations and requirements of the position. While the multiple layers of screening slow down the hiring process, they play an important role in ensuring the candidate is able to perform the functions of the job. The backgrounding process is also a requirement to make sure candidates are eligible to access secured SPD facilities and criminal justice information.

### Duration of Process

The hiring process involves multiple steps over multiple months. Table 1 is a sample timeline.

*Table 1. PEO Hiring Timeline*

	<b>Est. Start Date</b>	<b>Est. End Date</b>
1. Job Posting	8/15/2023	9/5/2023
2. Written Exam	9/16/2023	9/16/2023
3. Interviews	9/25/2023	9/30/2023
4. Fitness Assessment	10/14/2023	10/14/2023
5. Candidates input eSOPH background system	10/19/2023	11/2/2023
6. Background	11/3/2023	12/7/2023
7. Class Start	1/3/2024	3/1/2024

SPD's Metropolitan Bureau Chief has created a hiring group consisting of PEO Field Training Officers, (FTOs), PEO managers, and Human Resources personnel, to identify potential solutions to the process heavy and time-intensive hiring procedures. The group is working to determine if the written exam can be revised to better predict PEO success and if the hiring and background processes can be streamlined. In addition to these efforts, the PEO unit has restarted a referral program where PEOs receive a day off for referring a candidate that is hired, and another day off when their referral gets off probation.

### PEO Training Challenges

The Manager of the Parking Enforcement unit has indicated that the PEO unit's capacity to train new PEOs is currently limiting the number of candidates that can be sent through SPD's backgrounding process. It is possible that additional, dedicated PEO training positions would allow SPD to admit into the backgrounding process more candidates, as the department would have confidence that it has the back-end capacity to handle more frequent training classes.

The Manager indicates that when the PEO unit reaches full staffing, the dedicated trainers could be used for: (1) other required trainings such as First Aid or CPR; and (2) to expand the unit with more PEOs to assist with management of the city right-of-way or to increase civilian staffing of special events.

---

<sup>2</sup> SPD staff indicate that the applicant number is higher than the number of actual viable candidates; it includes candidates who were previously rejected, as well as applications that do not appear to be intended for the posted position.

It is likely that the addition of new, dedicated training positions would need to be negotiated as part of the collective bargaining process with both the PEO and PEO Supervisor unions. PEOs currently provide the department's basic PEO training while serving in an out-of-class PEO Supervisor role. This practice suggests that it would make sense to add one or two PEO Supervisor positions to serve as dedicated trainers. Although ultimately, the exact position type would be determined through the collective bargaining process, and it is possible that the department may reclassify the positions through the city's Classification and Compensations process.

Department efforts to fill PEO vacancies are not succeeding. The Council may wish to provide additional oversight and/or more resources to SPD to: (1) ensure that city's PEO hiring processes are streamlined; and (2) ensure that the PEO unit's training capacity does not continue to limit the number of candidates that might otherwise be hired.

**Options:**

- A. Create a Statement of Legislative Intent that requests that the Executive submit to the Council a report showing how SPD proposes to streamline the hiring process, and notes other changes that might be made to attract and retain PEOs.
- B. Add 2.0 FTE PEO Supervisor positions and create a Statement of Legislative Intent that requests that the positions be funded in 2025 and 2026 by salary savings that are created from current PEO vacancies. The annual cost of 1.0 FTE PEO Supervisor position is \$143,000.
- C. Option A + Option B
- D. No change.

**2. SPD's 30x30 Initiative**

SPD was one of the first police departments nationally to commit to the 30x30 Initiative, a program coordinated by the New York University Policing Project to advance the representation and experiences of women in policing in agencies across the United States. The Initiative, which was launched in 2021, is a coalition of police leaders, researchers, and professional organizations who share the common goals of (1) increasing the representation of women in police recruit classes to 30 percent by 2030 and (2) ensuring that police policies and culture intentionally support the success of qualified women officers throughout their careers. SPD was an early signatory to the "30x30 Pledge," affirming its support for these goals and for the need for the Department fully to represent the diverse residents it serves.

SPD views its work towards the 30x30 goals as having four phases. Phase I, completed in October 2022, involved an internal quantitative data-gathering effort and an assessment of SPD's compliance with the Initiative's "Immediate Actions," which include such areas of the availability of nursing areas for mothers returning from parental leave and the existence of strategic priorities around gender diversity in hiring, retention, and promotion. At that time, 14.5 percent of sworn SPD personnel identified as female. In Phase II, completed in February 2024, SPD retained a consultant, Dr. Lois James of Washington State University, to conduct a qualitative review of the perspectives of sworn and non-sworn women SPD employees to establish baseline sentiment and direction towards actionable recommendations.

The department's ongoing Phase III requests additional analysis by Dr. James, seeking to identify any gender disparity in SPD promotions, and the results of that analysis are anticipated to be available in December. Phase III work has also included the formation of an internal 30x30 workgroup that seeks to develop new programs that are consistent with the 30x30 Initiative and the department's commitment to transforming policing culture in ways that will better support women. In particular, this workgroup has identified flexible, round-the-clock childcare and flexible work schedules as two potential innovations that would better support women. SPD has engaged Marie Keller, a childcare consultant at the Imagine Institute, to develop a set of proposals that would implement new childcare options for SPD officers, and her work is anticipated to be completed in Q2 2025. SPD is also exploring opportunities for its women officers to participate in leadership development programs and expand their training, professional development, and career advancement opportunities. The department is also ensuring that existing leadership training promotes cultural change and develops skills consistent with the goals of the Initiative. In Phase IV, SPD will develop a roadmap to implement the Phase III recommendations that it accepts.

[ORD 127026](#), passed by the Council in May, included new annual reporting requirements for SPD related to actions the department was taking consistent with its 30x30 Pledge. SPD views the 30x30 Pledge as a cultural-change effort that requires commitment from officers and civilian staff throughout the department, as an element of their individual assigned bodies of work. Currently, there is not an SPD position designated as the operational coordinator of all 30x30 Initiative efforts and reporting, nor has the department made discrete investments in new programming that explicitly aligns such programming with the Initiative.

Council may wish to add staff and/or to direct investments that would align with the Initiative and reflect the priorities of the internal workgroup. Council may also wish to express support for funding SPD's current childcare and work-schedule focus areas.

**Options:**

- A. Add a staff member in SPD to document, coordinate, and monitor all department work related to the 30x30 Initiative, including development of Council-requested reports and an ongoing 30x30 Program funding request that could be added in a mid-year supplemental budget.
- B. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that SPD prepare a timeline for a future implementation of flexible work schedules and flexible round-the-clock childcare for sworn personnel and an impact analysis of such implementation.
- C. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent that expresses support for flexible round-the-clock childcare or flexible work schedules or both at SPD, particularly in terms of how any new offering would align with the 30x30 Initiative.
- D. Some combination of A, B, and C.
- E. No change



Legislation Text

---

**File #:** Inf 2584, **Version:** 1

---

Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department (CARE)

# COMMUNITY ASSISTED RESPONSE AND ENGAGEMENT (CARE) DEPARTMENT

2025 – 2026 Proposed Budget

Policy Considerations

---

Select Budget Committee | October 21, 2024

Ann Gorman, Analyst

# Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)

	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	% Change	2026 Proposed	% Change
<b>Operating Appropriations by BSL</b>					
911 Call Response	\$24,033	\$28,044	17%	\$29,442	5%
Community Assisted Response and Engagement	\$2,310	\$4,359	89%	\$6,500	49%
<b>Operating Total</b>	\$26,343	\$32,403	23%	\$35,942	11%

# Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)

	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	% Change	2026 Proposed	% Change
<b>Appropriation Totals (Operating)</b>					
Total Appropriations	\$26,343	\$32,403	23%	\$35,942	11%
Total FTE	163	186	14%	186	-
<b>Revenues</b>					
General Fund	\$26,343	\$32,403	23%	\$35,942	11%
Other Source(s)	-	-	-	-	-



# Policy Consideration

## 1. Implementation of Dual Dispatch Program

The City's dual dispatch pilot program began in October 2023. Operational constraints and the ongoing Seattle Police Department (SPD) staffing deficit have impeded its implementation as intended. Currently, CARE responders perform some of the same bodies of work as the Seattle Fire Department's (SFD's) Health One program. The CARE response program is in a significant expansion phase, with the number of responders set to quadruple.

### Options:

- A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requesting clarification of the vision/goals of CARE's response program, including milestones for evaluation.
- B. Adopt a SLI requesting that the Executive take measurable steps towards the increased provision of solely or dually dispatched CARE response.
- C. Adopt a SLI requesting that the Executive clarify the roles of SPD and SFD in responding to calls that are within CARE's purview.
- D. Adopt a SLI requesting that the Executive focus available CARE dual dispatch capacity in areas where it is most likely to be provided consistent with initial program scope.
- E. Some combination of A, B, C, and D above
- F. No change

# Policy Consideration

## 2. CARE Crisis Response Data Collection

Maximally thorough data collection was one of the goals of the dual dispatch pilot program, with the intent that it would help guide program development. A year after that program's launch, little data is available regarding (1) the specific benefits that CARE response provided, from the perspective of those who received that response; and (2) CARE's service integration with partner agencies.

### Options:

- A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that CARE develop more robust data-collection practices, as is legally permissible, to help provide a framework for ongoing CARE response program evaluation and future planning, potentially including a reporting requirement to Council.
- B. No change.

# Policy Consideration

## 3. Seattle Restoration Director position

This position was included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget and it has been filled. The Seattle Restoration Program is modeled after the Unified Care Team (UCT) and may share some work purview with that unit. It will lead the new Downtown Activation Team (DAT), adding a public safety focus to the existing Downtown Activation Plan (DAP), and it will leverage the contributions of various City departments. The position reports to the City Director of Public Safety. In the longer term, this position will lead an institutional change to (1) centralize in CARE programming and data collection related to the intersection of public safety interventions, public order, and human services delivery; and (2) and ensure that such appropriate response is dispatched when needed.

### Options:

- A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting details about the near- and long-term priorities of the new program and its relationships to the UCT and DAP, including potential near-term staffing needs.
- B. No change.

# Questions?

2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET  
**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS PAPER**

**COMMUNITY ASSISTED RESPONSE AND ENGAGEMENT (CARE) DEPARTMENT**

Central Staff Analyst: Ann Gorman

This paper highlights selected policy considerations related to the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department’s 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. Considerations included here reflect Central Staff’s initial analysis of the Executive’s budget submittal and its context, as well as Councilmembers’ interest in various dimensions of CARE Department operations. These considerations are not intended to be exhaustive, and others may surface as Central Staff continues its analysis of the proposed budget. For more information about CARE’s 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, please see the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Overview Papers.

**Policy Considerations**

**1. Implementation of Dual Dispatch Pilot Program**

The CARE Department launched the City’s dual dispatch pilot program in October 2023. The goals of the program included (1) the diversification of emergency response options responsive to community need, particularly for behavioral health crisis calls, and (2) the preservation of first-responder capacity for appropriate emergency responses, as provided by the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and the Seattle Fire Department (SFD). Under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG), a CARE response unit would be dually dispatched to the scene of certain 9-1-1 call types<sup>1</sup> in tandem with an SPD response unit. Then, upon SPD determination that the scene did not pose a safety risk nor have a nexus to law enforcement – i.e., that it concerned a behavioral health crisis – SPD would leave the scene and allow the CARE unit to address the crisis and respond as needed. The Executive chose the Downtown Activation Plan (DAP) catchment area as the location for this pilot. It was the understanding of the Executive and Council that data collected during the pilot period could guide the future broadening of CCRs’ purview, to additional call types or potentially to the “sole dispatch” of a CARE response unit to a discrete subset of behavioral health crisis calls.

The pilot program has been hampered both by the current constraints on its operation and by SPD’s ongoing staffing deficit. SPD categorizes the 9-1-1 call types to which CARE may respond as Priority 3 and Priority 4, and SPD is deprioritizing all such calls to conserve its limited resources for response to Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls. Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls pose a more immediate risk to public safety and may require armed law enforcement presence. Consequently, when a CARE response unit is dispatched to the scene of a Priority 3 Person Down call (for example), CARE Community Crisis Responders (CCRs) must wait for SPD to clear that scene for them to be able to provide assistance – and available SPD response units may be so occupied with Priority 1 and Priority 2 responses that none can respond to the Priority 3 scene for a lengthy interval. During this

---

<sup>1</sup> These call types are those coded by 9-1-1 Call Center call takers as Person Down and those coded as Welfare Check where the call subject is not behind the wheel of a vehicle and no minors are present at the scene.

time, CCRs may not act, and the subject of the call – the person who was “down” – often leaves the scene volitionally before SPD arrives. Citywide, a disproportionate number of Priority 1 and Priority 2 9-1-1 calls for service reference a location in the DAP catchment area, so delayed response to Priority 3 calls is relatively more common in this area.

Consequently, the “dual dispatch” aspect of the pilot program has generally not been realized. As of September 24<sup>th</sup>, a CARE CCR team had been dually dispatched 15 times since program launch. As of the same date, a CARE CCR team had been requested as a secondary response 682 times. A secondary response, in this context, is one that is requested by a first-responder unit (SPD or SFD) when its evaluation of the scene suggests that CARE CCR participation will contribute to scene resolution. Forty percent of this secondary response for CARE involved a need for transportation, for instance to a medical clinic or a relative’s place of residence. Further, SPD has on 27 occasions directed the solo response of a CARE CCR team, either in response to a request from a non-SPD unit (e.g., from Department of Parks and Recreation staff) or by giving CARE permission to respond to a call in lieu of an SPD response unit. Absent the relocation of future CARE response operations to areas with a lower concentration of Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls for service or a change in current dispatch protocols, it is likely that the City will not collect sufficient data, as was envisioned, to assist its ongoing scoping of appropriate dually dispatched CARE CCR response.

Just recently, there has been a notable shift in CARE deployment practices. As of October 8, CARE operations have reflected two changes. First, teams of CARE responders have been driving through the DAP catchment area proactively, looking for and engaging with those who may need assistance.<sup>2</sup> Second, CARE CCRs have begun responding to “quasi-medical” calls. (Central Staff will learn more about this new program direction and the call types it includes.) Through October 14, CARE has responded to 44 such calls, which is a striking increase in CCRs’ utilization compared to the period referenced above. This pivot, though it may be belated, is consistent with the iterative approach that underlay the initial CARE program design.

With respect to behavioral health crisis calls, SFD’s Health One program plans to begin a trial that will provide limited direct dispatch of Health One resources for this purpose. Specifically, during Health One hours of operation, this resource would be dispatched to the scene of behavioral health crisis calls where a subject is not imminently suicidal, and this subject wants an in-person response rather than a transfer to a telephone crisis or nurse line. (During hours when Health One is not in operation, the SFD Fire Alarm Center, which dispatches calls for SFD service, would send an SFD basic life services (BLS) response unit.)

Health One provides specialized non-emergency outreach, transport, and provider referrals, and Health One units – like the current CARE response unit – disproportionately serve vulnerable community members who lack access to these resources. Councilmembers have expressed their intent that the City prioritize efficiency and effectiveness in its delivery of dispatched response, and especially given the unexpected transportation role that CCRs have assumed and their new

---

<sup>2</sup> The SFD Health One program refers to this practice as “self-dispatch.” Since program inception, approximately 60% of all Health One responses, excluding those of Health 99, have been on a self-dispatched basis. When an individual receives assistance on this basis, it is considered a response even though no 9-1-1 call was made requesting the assistance.

involvement in quasi-medical calls, it is possible that there are opportunities to clarify the two departments' specific responsibilities and ensure that dispatch protocols reflect them. More research is needed to understand this potential shared body of work.

Such clarification is of special concern in the context of the planned 2025 expansion of CARE response capacity. This expansion, as described in the "Expansion 2025" attachment to the CARE Department Budget Overview Paper, would increase the number of CCR teams from three to 12 and significantly increase their collective geographical range. Simultaneously with this expansion, the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget would also increase SFD's capacity to provide non-emergency response. Council may wish to confirm an understanding of the CARE response program's intent, request a renewed commitment either to the initial dual-dispatch concept or to sole dispatch of CARE responders, and/or seek clarification regarding the roles of SPD and SFD in responding to 9-1-1 calls that are within CARE's purview.

**Options:**

- A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that the Executive clarify the vision for and the goals of the Community Crisis Responder program and provide milestones for the evaluation of progress towards those goals.
- B. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that the Executive take measurable actions towards the increased provision of solely or dually dispatched CARE response.
- C. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that the Executive clarify the roles of SPD and SFD in responding to calls that are within CARE's purview.
- D. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting that the Executive focus available CARE dual dispatch capacity in areas of the City where it is most likely to be provided consistent with the pilot program's original scope – that is, in areas with relatively few Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls, so that an SPD unit is more likely to respond to the scene in a timely manner.
- E. Some combination of A, B, C, and D above, as either separate or integrated Statements of Legislative Intent
- F. No change

**2. CARE Crisis Response Data Collection**

CARE has built partnerships with several community-based organizations with expertise in providing services to those with behavioral health challenges. These organizations include We Deliver Care, which runs the Third Avenue Project, and the REACH program of Evergreen Treatment Services. Currently, the department does not track interactions between CCRs and providers like these. These interactions could concern a need for on-scene assistance or an ad hoc inquiry about an individual known to both CARE and the external provider. Due to public disclosure laws that restrict CARE from collecting identifying information about those served by CCRs, the department does not have data that would illuminate outcomes for those individuals.

As noted above, data collection was one of the goals of the dual-dispatch pilot, based on the idea that it could help guide the continued development of the program. Although the department has worked in concert with SPD to perform data analysis related to dispatch and response, little data

exists that could help illustrate the specific, experienced benefit of CCR response and CARE's service integration with partner agencies. This is likely due in part to the inherent difficulty of measuring the impact of social services. However, it was the department's choice not to track interactions, and types of interactions, across partners in the city behavioral-health ecosystem.

Seattle University researchers are currently conducting an evaluation of the CARE response program that will assess, via interviews, how the CCR team is perceived by impacted stakeholders, notably SPD and SFD -- for instance, the CCR unit's effect on these stakeholders' morale. This evaluation will not include interviews with individuals who received service from CARE CCRs.

More robust, maximally outcomes-focused data collection could also help CARE be more competitive for grant funding related to non-police response and community safety interventions. As described in the CARE Budget Overview Paper, the department received a \$1.9 million grant this year to support its operational needs, but many funding opportunities have an analysis and/or evaluation component.

**Options:**

- A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requesting that the department develop more robust data-collection practices, as is legally permissible, such that they may help provide a framework for ongoing CCR response program evaluation and future planning. Such SLI could include a reporting requirement to the Council.
- B. No change

**3. Seattle Restoration Director Position**

The 2025 Proposed Budget includes position authority and ongoing funding (\$216,000) for 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 3 position with the working title of Seattle Restoration Director. The CARE Department has already filled this position, which will have oversight of the evolving Seattle Restoration Program. The position will initially coordinate the new Downtown Activation Team (DAT), which Mayor Harrell referenced in his speech introducing the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. This team's purview will include place-based activations, cleanings, and safety operations in the downtown area. A pilot implementation of the DAT has been underway for the past several weeks, which various stakeholders – including the Downtown Seattle Association and the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce – have helped inform, and Executive staff feel optimistic about its results to date. Following a pilot period of performing this work in the downtown area, the Seattle Restoration Program is anticipated to expand into other areas of the city. A timeline for that expansion is not yet available.

Conceptually, the Seattle Restoration Program is modeled after the Unified Care Team (UCT) in terms of its interdepartmental reach and its use of data to identify priority sites for intervention. It is intended to build on the Downtown Activation Plan (DAP) efforts that are currently being coordinated by the Office of Economic Development (OED); these efforts also include place-based activations and cleanings. The goal of the DAP is to revitalize the downtown area by means of various legislative, regulatory, and programmatic efforts, and the proposed new program recognizes that this revitalization requires a complementary dedicated focus on public-safety improvements. Although this position will be housed in the CARE Department, the Seattle



Restoration Director – like the UCT Manager – will work under the authority of the Mayor’s Office to leverage the contributions of participating City departments. (This dispersed operational model means that expenditures associated with the Seattle Restoration Program may not be so allocated in departmental budgets.) The Seattle Restoration Director will report directly to the City Director of Public Safety.

In the longer term, it is the Executive’s intent that the Seattle Restoration Director lead a broad institutional change, across various departments, to centralize in CARE City programming and data collection relating to the intersection of public safety interventions, public order, and human services delivery. The basis for the proposed centralization is that the current siloing of this body of work throughout the City impedes efficiency and that 9-1-1 is the public’s point of connection to all of these needs and services. This intent would be realized when all 9-1-1 calls that do not require an armed law enforcement presence receive an immediate response by the appropriate City-staffed or contracted resource, dispatched to the scene where it is needed. In other words, the CARE Call Center could eventually have the ability to dispatch many types of non-police response, of which a CARE CCR team is only one example.

As Central Staff has engaged with Executive staff during this budget process, they have shared that the CARE Department’s current priorities are the expansion of the Crisis Response program, the streamlining of call types and dispatch protocols across the City’s three public safety agencies, and the reduction of response wait times to 9-1-1 calls. The proposed body of work for the Seattle Restoration Program will add a major new responsibility to this list. Council may want to seek additional information about this new, rapidly evolving program.

**Options:**

- A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent requesting details about the near-term and long-term priorities of the Seattle Restoration Program and its relationships to (1) the Downtown Activation Plan and (2) the UCT, including potential near-term staffing needs associated with the identified priorities.
- B. No change



Legislation Text

---

**File #:** Inf 2586, **Version:** 1

---

Seattle Fire Department (SFD)

# SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2025 – 2026 Proposed Budget Policy Considerations

---

Select Budget Committee | October 21, 2024

Ann Gorman, Analyst

# Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)

	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	% Change	2026 Proposed	% Change
<b>Operating Appropriations by BSL</b>					
Fire Prevention	\$12,340	\$14,720	19.3%	\$15,356	4.3%
Leadership and Administration	\$50,035	\$51,818	3.6%	\$54,208	4.6%
Operations	\$220,200	\$261,025	18.5%	\$271,121	3.9%
<b>Operating Total</b>	<b>\$282,575</b>	<b>\$327,563</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>\$340,685</b>	<b>4.0%</b>

# Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)

	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	% Change	2026 Proposed	% Change
<b>Appropriation Totals (Operating)</b>					
Total Appropriations	\$282,575	\$327,563	15.9%	\$340,685	4.0%
Total FTE	1,204	1,205	0.1%	1,206	0.1%
<b>Revenues</b>					
General Fund	\$282,575	\$327,563	15.9%	\$340,685	4.0%
Other Source(s)	-	-	-	-	-

# Policy Consideration

## 1. BLS Transport Fees ORD

This ordinance would authorize SFD to collect fees when it provides Basic Life Services (BLS) transportation by ambulance to a hospital or clinic. SFD would bill the insurance provider of the individual receiving transport. For those who do not submit insurance information, SFD would bill that individual, who would have access to a “compassionate care” financial assistance program with a sliding payment scale.

SFD has not yet finalized policies and procedures, or a communications plan related to the proposed legislation. The department currently transports about 120 individuals per year and estimates full-year revenue from the proposed new fees at \$314,000.

### Options:

- A. Pass
- B. Amend and pass
- C. Do not pass

# Questions?

2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET  
**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS PAPER**

**SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT (SFD)**

Central Staff Analyst: Ann Gorman

This paper highlights a single piece of legislation submitted by the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) with the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. Other considerations related to SFD may surface as Central Staff continues its analysis of the proposed budget. For more information about SFD's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, please see the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Overview Papers.

**1. Policy Consideration 1: BLS Transport Fees ORD**

This ordinance would authorize the collection of fees for basic life services (BLS) provided by SFD firefighters. SFD contracts with a private vendor, American Medical Response (AMR) for the BLS transportation by ambulance of those needing care to a hospital or clinic. BLS transportation ("transport") is distinct from Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport, which occurs when SFD directly transports an individual with a life-threatening condition in a City-operated aid car. BLS transport occurs after SFD firefighters have provided on-scene BLS or emergency medical services (EMS) services. For individuals it transports who have insurance, either privately or through a government program, AMR seeks reimbursement for its costs from these insurance programs or companies and from copayments billed to individuals.<sup>1</sup> AMR charges the full copayment amount but also offers payment plans to individuals who do not have insurance or who are experiencing financial hardship. Sixteen percent of these accounts are eventually sent to collections.

Occasionally (approximately ten times a month) an AMR unit is not available and SFD provides this transport in a department aid car. Unlike AMR, SFD does not currently seek insurance reimbursement to cover its costs for providing transport service. With its proposed effective date of January 1, 2025, SFD estimates that this ordinance, if passed by Council, would generate aggregate new reimbursement revenue of \$314,000 in 2025.

There are 22 fire agencies within King County, including the Seattle Fire Department. Eighteen of them offer some degree of BLS transport, and 17 of these agencies bill for the BLS transport services they provide. SFD is the only agency in King County that provides BLS transport with no associated billing or cost recovery. The structure and level of the proposed new SFD fee is consistent with that levied by other local fire agencies: \$950 per transport plus \$15 per mile.

SFD would operationalize this proposed new authority by executing a contract with a local third-party billing service (the 2025 Proposed Budget includes funding to establish this contract). That service would bill individuals on behalf of SFD and retain a per-transport fee to cover its own costs. This model is typical for fire agencies that bill for BLS transport.

The proposed legislation establishes a City policy that ability to pay is not a condition of BLS transport service. It specifies that "all aspects of emergency medical services the City currently provides, including BLS transport, shall be provided to all patients without discrimination toward

---

<sup>1</sup> AMR's current copayment charge is \$3460 plus \$49.50 per mile.



those with no or inadequate ability to pay.” It also specifies that any individual receiving BLS transport from SFD who does not supply the City with the necessary information and documentation to bill the individual’s insurance provider shall be billed for the entire fee, as is required by law. SFD intends that all such individuals are simultaneously allowed to complete a hardship waiver. Relatedly, SFD also intends to create a “compassionate care” financial assistance program, with a sliding scale that takes into account individuals’ ability to pay, as part of its implementation of the proposed BLS transport billing program.

SFD has not yet finalized its policies and processes related to the proposed new legislation, which would include training for the SFD firefighters who would provide BLS transport via aid car. Its communications strategy around the proposed new policy is also still under development, with anticipated implementation in early 2025. SFD has also not completed a Language Access Plan related to the proposed new legislation. As a result, SFD anticipates that it will not begin collecting the proposed BLS transport fees until early spring, which would decrement the full-year revenues as forecast in the fiscal note accompanying this legislation and referenced above.

At some fire agencies across the country, all BLS transport is provided by uniformed fire department staff rather than by a contracted ambulance company. This legislation does not contemplate that possibility for SFD. Those agencies are generally much smaller than SFD, and they are located in states that have established different policies around the administration of the federal Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) program, which offers reimbursements from Medicaid funds to public and private EMS agencies. Additionally, City Budget Office (CBO) analysis suggests that the one-time and ongoing costs of provisioning SFD as the sole Seattle provider of BLS services would preclude full cost recovery for the City on any time horizon.

The number of individuals requiring BLS transport by SFD, should Council pass this ordinance, is very small, and only a subset of them will receive a bill for this service. However, receiving a bill, which could easily be in excess of \$1,000, could be a worrying experience for them, particularly if their financial resources are limited or if they are daunted by the prospect of engaging with their insurance provider. SFD intends that bills will include contact information about available financial assistance. Individuals receiving bills may also contact Councilmember offices to seek further assistance.

Council may wish to amend the effective date of this legislation, postponing the effective date of the legislation to align with SFD’s development of policies and processes and a Language Access Plan and with the implementation of its communication plan. Council may also wish to request that SFD prepare a report, or make a presentation to the Public Safety Committee, providing an overview of the deliverables listed above and the compassionate care financial assistance program, prior to the legislation’s effective date.

**Options:**

- A. Pass
- B. Amend and pass
- C. Do not pass



Legislation Text

---

**File #:** Inf 2585, **Version:** 1

---

City Attorney's Office (LAW)

# City Attorney's Office (LAW)

## 2025 – 2026 Proposed Budget Policy Considerations

---

Select Budget Committee | October 21, 2024

Tamaso Johnson, Analyst

# Budget Summary: LAW Department

	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	% Change	2026 Proposed	% Change
<b>Operating Appropriations by BSL</b>					
Civil Division	\$16.5M	\$18.2M	10.3%	\$19.1M	4.8%
Criminal Division	\$10.6M	\$11.7M	10.5%	\$12.2M	4.6%
Leadership and Administration	\$12.9M	\$14.8M	14.6%	\$15.7M	6.1%
Precinct Liaison	\$0.7M	\$0.8M	12.3%	\$0.9M	4.8%
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$40.8M</b>	<b>\$45.6M</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>\$47.9M</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Total FTE</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>-</b>

# Policy Consideration

## 1. Civil Division Attorney Staffing Reductions

- LAW's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget unfunds 2.0 FTE Assistant City Attorneys in the Employment and Contracts/Utilities Sections of the Civil Division.
- This proposed staffing reduction would save \$434,000 in 2025 and \$458,000 in 2026.
- The proposed staffing reduction may result in additional costs to City departments, potentially eclipsing projected savings, through the need to hire outside counsel for legal services currently provided by the Civil Division.

### Options:

- A. Fully restore Civil Division staffing to current levels by adding \$434,000 in 2025 and \$458,000 in 2026.
- B. Restore funding for one of the two positions at a cost of \$217,000 in 2025 and \$229,000 in 2026.
- C. No change.

# Policy Consideration

## 2. Specialty Court Unit Prosecutor Reduction

- LAW's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget unfunds 1.0 FTE Prosecutor in the Specialty Court Unit of the Criminal Division.
- This proposed staffing reduction would save \$182,000 in 2025 and \$192,000 in 2026.
- LAW has stated that staff reductions to Prosecutors will reduce timely response to criminal referrals and may reduce the ability to implement recently passed criminal justice legislation to the extent that it involves potential diversion opportunities in a Specialty Court.

### Options:

- A. Restore funding to for this position by adding \$182,000 in 2025 and \$192,000 in 2026.
- B. No change.

# Policy Consideration

## 3. Implementation of Public Safety Policies

- There may be additional costs, not included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, associated with implementation by LAW and the Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) of recent public safety legislation and Executive policy decisions.
- Costs of this kind realized in 2025, but not included in this Proposed Budget, may be brought as mid-year supplemental budget requests.
- LAW has stated that staff reductions to Prosecutors will reduce timely response to criminal referrals and may reduce the ability to implement recently passed criminal justice legislation to the extent that it involves potential diversion opportunities in a Specialty Court.

# Policy Consideration

## 3. Implementation of Public Safety Policies (cont.)

### a. Prosecutor Staffing

- Recent City legislation creating new crimes & expanding prosecutorial authority is likely to increase referrals from SPD to LAW
- Without additional staffing, increased caseloads from new laws may create delays in prosecution or reduced resources for other types of cases
- LAW has stated the addition of 1.0 FTE “Floating Prosecutor” at a cost of \$182,000 in 2025, in addition to restoration of the Specialty Court Prosecutor, would improve workloads anticipated related to recent policy changes.



# Policy Consideration

## 3. Implementation of Public Safety Policies (cont.)

### b. Court Costs for Jail Expansion

- Implementation of the SCORE Jail agreement is likely to have additional costs for SMC in 2025-on, which are not included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget
- SMC has developed preliminary cost estimates based on two scenarios:
  1. Transport to SMC: \$196,000 in 2025, \$520,000 in 2026
    - Additional staffing and other costs to transport defendants from SCORE for hearings
  2. New Judicial Department: \$584,000 in 2025, \$1.7M in 2026
    - Additional staffing and other costs to create new judicial department at SMC to handle virtual hearings with in-custody defendants at SCORE
    - Would require additional authorizing legislation and labor agreement changes

# Policy Consideration

## 3. Implementation of Public Safety Policies (cont.)

### Options:

- A. Increase appropriations in the 2025-26 Proposed Budgets for LAW and/or SMC.
- B. No change in 2025-2026 Proposed Budget for LAW and/or SMC. Additional costs may be addressed during a future supplemental budget request.

# Questions?

2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET  
**POLICY CONSIDERATIONS PAPER**

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE / LAW DEPARTMENT (LAW)**

Central Staff Analyst: Tamaso Johnson

This paper highlights selected policy considerations related to the City Attorney's Office (LAW) 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. Considerations included here are not intended to be exhaustive and others may surface as Central Staff continues its analysis of the proposed budget. For more information about LAW's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, please see the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Overview Paper for this department.

**Policy Considerations**

**1. Civil Division Attorney Staffing Reductions**

LAW's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget unfunds (without abrogating) two Assistant City Attorneys in the Civil Division, one in the Employment Section and one in the Contracts/Utilities Section. These positions provide guidance and legal advice to departments and elected officials on matters related to employment and labor issues, and contracting and utilities, respectively. This proposed reduction would result in General Fund savings in LAW of \$434,000 in 2025 and \$458,000 in 2026.

Though there would be immediate cost savings generated by staffing reductions in the Civil Division, LAW believes that continued demand for the legal services these positions currently provide may necessitate the retention of private outside counsel by the city to provide advice and/or representation normally undertaken by Civil Division attorneys. Because billing rates for outside counsel are typically significantly higher than the effective rates of LAW attorneys, LAW has estimated that the proposed staffing reduction in the Civil Division may result in additional outside counsel legal services costs of up to \$1.8 million per year. (This estimate is consistent with LAW paying an average of \$450 per hour for the full-time work of two FTE.) Depending on the nature of the work, LAW can recover the cost of legal representation from non-General Fund sources, such as the Seattle Public Utilities, and Seattle City Light. Thus, these costs, whether paid to outside counsel or new City attorneys, would not necessarily be fully borne by the General Fund.

**Options:**

- A. Full restoration – To fully restore the Civil Division staffing to current levels, the Council would need to add \$434,000 in 2025 and \$458,000 in 2026.
- B. Partial restoration – The Council could choose to restore funding for one of the two Civil Division Assistant City Attorney positions, either in the Employment Section or the Contract/Utilities Section, at a cost of \$217,000 in 2025 and \$229,000 in 2026.
- C. No change.

## 2. Specialty Court Unit Prosecutor Reduction

LAW's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget unfunds (without abrogating) one Prosecutor from the Specialty Court Unit of the Criminal Division. This proposed reduction would result in General Fund savings in LAW of \$182,000 in 2025 and \$192,000 in 2026.

The Specialty Court Unit handles cases in Mental Health Court, Veteran's Treatment Court, and the Legal Intervention and Network of Care, as well as various non-criminal infractions and other violations. This unit also staffed Community Court cases prior to LAW's withdrawal from the agreement establishing this specialty court and its subsequent dissolution in 2023. LAW has stated that staff reductions to Prosecutors in this section of the Criminal Division will reduce timely response to criminal referrals and may reduce the ability to implement recently passed criminal justice legislation to the extent that it involves potential diversion opportunities in a Specialty Court.

### Options:

- A. Restore funding to maintain current staffing in the Specialty Court Unit by adding \$182,000 in 2025 and \$192,000 in 2026.
- B. No change.

## 3. Implementation of Public Safety Policies

There may be additional costs to LAW and the Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) associated with ongoing implementation of public safety legislation and policy changes made by the Executive not currently included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. Examples of recently passed Council public safety legislation that could generate additional staffing or other implementation costs include: Stay Out of Drug Area (SODA) Ordinance ([CB 120835](#)), Prostitution Loitering and Stay out of Areas of Prostitution (SOAP) Ordinance ([CB 120836](#)), and Illegal Racing Ordinance ([CB 120806](#)). Additionally, the City's expansion of jail capacity via the new Interlocal Agreement with the South County Correctional Entity (SCORE) to use jail beds at that facility (See [CB 120825](#)) and the [renegotiation of the King County Jail agreement](#) to increase booking capacity may also result in additional implementation costs not included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget.

### a. Prosecutor Staffing

The creation of new criminal offenses, or expansion of authority to prosecute existing crimes, by recently passed legislation is likely to generate additional referrals to LAW by the Seattle Police Department. Without additional staffing resources, caseloads for Criminal Division attorneys and other staff are likely to increase as a result, which may create delays in the referral and prosecution process and/or reduced resources to devote to other types of cases. LAW has stated that the addition of a 1.0 FTE "Floating Prosecutor" in the Criminal Division at a cost of \$182,000 in 2025 would help address anticipated staffing needs related to the workload of this Division, in addition to the restoration of the Specialty Court Unit Prosecutor as discussed above.

**b. Court Costs for Jail Expansion**

SMC also anticipates additional costs associated with the implementation of Seattle’s use of the SCORE jail that are not currently included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget. SMC has developed preliminary budget estimates for two implementation options: 1) transport of defendants from SCORE to SMC for hearings; 2) creation of a new judicial department at SMC to conduct virtual hearings for in-custody defendants at SCORE. Option one is estimated to add 3.0 FTE and cost an additional \$196,000 in 2025 and \$520,000 in 2026. Option two is estimated to add 11.0 FTE cost an additional \$584,000 in 2025 and \$1.7 million in 2026. The bulk of these cost estimates consist of additional staffing, and both options assume implementation in Q3 of 2025. Option two, establishing a new judicial department, would also require new legislation and amendments to relevant labor agreements with represented SMC employees. Though there is \$2.8 million in 2025 funding allocated to the implementation of the SCORE agreement included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget for Finance and Administrative Services, it is not clear what portion of these dollars, if any, may be available specifically for additional SMC costs. The Executive plans to include any additional costs related to the implementation of jail capacity expansion, for SMC and/or other City departments, in a future supplemental budget request once these costs are better understood.

Potential additional costs for LAW and SMC associated with the implementation of public safety policies described above but not included in the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget may be requested as part of a future mid-year supplemental budget request.

**Options:**

- A. Increase appropriations in the 2025-26 Proposed Budgets for LAW and/or SMC.
- B. No change in 2025-2026 Proposed Budget for LAW and/or SMC. Additional costs may be addressed during a future supplemental budget request.