

**Seattle City Council Select Budget Committee**  
 Councilmember Budget Proposals | Tuesday, October 28, 2025

**City Budget Office (CBO)**

Number	Title	Sponsor	Packet Page
CBO-100S-A-1	Request that CBO and Council Central Staff develop a report that summarizes shared terms and concepts around sustainable budgeting and the calculations that define sustainable budget decisions	Strauss	2

## 2026 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT

V1

---

### **CBO-100S-A**

Request that CBO and Council Central Staff develop a report that summarizes shared terms and concepts around sustainable budgeting and the calculations that define sustainable budget decisions

---

### **SPONSORS**

**Dan Strauss**, Joy Hollingsworth, Robert Kettle

---

### **CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY**

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) would request that Central Staff and the City Budget Office (CBO) collaborate to create shared and easily understood definitions of the variables and factors that contribute to the structural budget deficit, to provide a clear 'road map' to fiscal sustainability. Such a road map would build on the Council's recent commitment to budget reform. As the City grappled with the fiscal disruptions and high levels of uncertainty from the Covid -19 pandemic, this work began in 2021 with RES 31954, the single-year budget resolution, which recognized during a time of great economic uncertainty that prior assumptions of rapid economic growth no longer applied, and that enhanced forward looking fiscal and economic projections would be needed to help guide the way to the City's 'new normal'.

The work continued in 2023 with the Fiscal Transparency Program (ORD 126962 and RES 32116), which built on and strengthened those initial financial planning and reporting requirements, by way of including long term impacts in fiscal notes, requiring publicly available assumptions in the GF financial plan and requiring more frequent updates to the plan as new information became available, and strengthening the City Budget Director's intra-year budget transfer authority to minimize year-end budget exceptions.

The work is anticipated to culminate in 2026 with the requirements in ORD 127259, the business and occupations tax restructure ordinance passed in August 2025, which mandate that, beginning with the fall 2026 budget process, the GF and JumpStart Fund (JSF) financial plans reflect balanced (revenues equal to or greater than expenditures) projections in future years.

The report requested by this SLI would be a compact guide of definitions and shared terms that builds on this prior work and incorporates the expectations of ORD 127259 by way of serving as a 'Readers Digest' of fiscal sustainability to help the City Council and Mayor clearly navigate the difficult trade-offs that will be necessary on path to sustainable GF and JSF budgets during the 2027- 2028 budget process. This work would naturally define the financial interrelationship between the GF and JSF in explaining sustainability challenges, and would cover factors like the role of underspend and other assumptions in out-year expenditure and revenue projections and the appropriate level of fiscal data necessary to explain complex concepts clearly to facilitate decision-making.

**Responsible Council Committee(s):** Finance, Native Communities & Tribal Governments

**DUE DATE:** May 15, 2026

**2026 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT**