

July 17, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Finance, Native Communities, & Tribal Governments Committee
From: Tom Mikesell, Analyst & Ben Noble, Director
Subject: Council Bill 120812: Mid-year Supplemental Budget Ordinance

On July 17, 2024, the Finance, Native Communities, and Tribal Governments Committee (Committee) will discuss [Council Bill \(CB\) 120812](#), which would amend the City’s 2024 Budget.

This memo provides (1) background on budget adjustments to date; (2) describes CB 120812; (3) identifies potential issues and options for the Committee’s consideration; and (4) describes next steps in the budget adjustment process for 2024.

Most of the proposed adjustments in CB 120812 are technical in nature, and several present a policy choice for which the Council may consider alternatives. The key policy choices before the Council embedded in this legislation include accepting, modifying, or rejecting the following proposals:

- New appropriations for new and existing public safety programs.
- A proviso applied to \$10 million of JumpStart funds in the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) Budget, to allow use for student mental health support.
- Transfer of \$400,000 allocated for Chinatown-International District alley and right-of-way cleanup from the Office of Economic Development (OED) to the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Clean City Initiative.
- Creation of 21 new positions in the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department.
- Creation of 21 new positions in the Human Services Department, 19 of which would be dedicated to the Unified Care Team (UCT).

Background – Approved Budget Adjustments to Date

As shown in *Table 1 (2024 Revised Budget-to-Date)*, as of July 1, 2024, a combination of automatic and Council- approved budget adjustments have increased the City’s 2024 Adopted Budget by \$2.1 billion or 26 percent.

Table 1. 2024 Revised Budget-to-Date

Fund	2024 Adopted	Adjustments as of 07/01/24	Revised Budget 07/01/24	Percent Increase
General	\$1,722 M	\$179 M	\$1,901 M	11%
All Other	\$6,116 M	\$1,878 M	\$7,994 M	31%
Total	\$7,838 M	\$2,057 M	\$9,896 M	26%

Most of the \$2.1 billion increase is from automatic carryforwards and legislation described in the [Central Staff memo](#) for the 2023 Carryforward Bill ([Ordinance 127036](#)), which Council passed on June 4, 2024. The remainder is from [Ordinance 127034](#), which passed on May 28, 2024 and appropriated \$1.6 million from the Solid Waste Fund as part of an interlocal agreement with King County that allows for the equitable disposal of residual waste that results from the processing of recyclable materials that have been collected from King County’s solid waste jurisdiction.

CB 120618 – 2024 Mid-year Supplemental Ordinance

CB 120618 is the second comprehensive supplemental budget legislation transmitted by the Executive in 2024, proposing mid-year appropriation, position, and capital project changes to meet needs that are assumed to be unforeseeable at the time the 2024 budget was adopted in November 2023. Overall, this legislation would decrease the 2024 revised budget by \$171 million and would add 48 positions. The appropriation decrease is primarily due to technical changes which abandon \$208.5 million of capital budget appropriations. After adjusting for these technical reductions, this bill would increase the budget by \$37.3 million.

The City faces a long-term structural budget deficit, where General Fund (GF) expenditures are outpacing GF revenues. At the [May 15, 2024, meeting of the Select Budget Committee](#), Central Staff updated the Committee on the GF financial status following the April economic and revenue forecast prepared by the Office of Economic and Revenue Forecasts, and included key updates to expenditure projections based on best available information at the time. At that time, Central Staff estimated that the 2024 unreserved fund balance would drop to a negative \$12 million. However, that estimate did not include savings from the hiring freeze and pause on large, new contracts announced by the Executive earlier in the year. The savings from these actions put the 2024 budget “back in the black” on a projected basis. That said, absent remedies and/or drastic improvements in the underlying GF revenue forecast, the projected deficit [grows to \\$258 million in 2025](#), and would continue at roughly that level in the future.

The state budget act requires the Mayor to submit a balanced budget, and as such the 2025 projected deficit must be resolved in the forthcoming proposal using a combination of one-time and ongoing measures. That said, those measures are currently unknown; what is known is that proposals in this ordinance have a fiscal impact to the GF, and in that way factor into the sustainability conversation of the GF. While this assessment does not decrease the potential the value of any of the proposals in the ordinance, it bears consideration, and as such the following sections of this memorandum offer policy considerations for the proposed GF changes within the overarching sustainability discussion.

General Fund Review

CB 120812 would decrease the 2024 GF budget appropriation by \$1.1 million, which is the net effect of \$2.1 million of new GF appropriations being more than offset by a \$3.2 million reduction to existing grant-backed appropriations, which is the combined result of several factors, including:

- \$0.5 million increase to existing grants.
- (\$1.9) million of grant abandonments, which are instances where grant-backed work has been completed, and the balance of the appropriation is no longer needed.
- (\$1.8) million of inter-fund grant transfers.

From a GF revenue perspective, the bill would also decrease revenues by a total of \$2.7 million, due to the \$3.2 million reduction to grant revenues (commensurate with the decrease to grant-backed appropriations described above) which is only partially offset by a \$534,000 revenue increase tied to specific new items added in the bill. The net GF fiscal impact from the proposed expenditure and revenue changes would be a \$1.6 million decrease in the 2024 ending balance compared to the May 15th estimate. Table 2 includes the items that contribute to the \$1.6 million GF fiscal impact (including the revenue backed items to match the high-level totals). Following the table is a description of each item, including the long-term implications, if any.

Table 2. Summary of GF Items with 2024 Fiscal Impacts

Title	Department	Appropriation Change	Revenue Change	Net Fiscal Impact
Increase Appropriation for Transfer to Revenue Stabilization Fund	Finance General	\$396,000		\$396,000
2023 Surcharge from Central Service Departments	Construction and Inspections	\$64,060		\$64,060
Paramedic Student Training	Fire	\$258,000		\$258,000
Sexual Assault Unit Investments	Police	\$250,000		\$250,000
SPD Police Recruiting	Police	\$800,000		\$800,000
DON/SPU Community Engagement MOA	Neighborhoods	\$41,600	(\$41,600)	\$0
Dangerous Buildings Abatement	Fire	\$350,000	(\$350,000)	\$0
Seattle City Light Paralegal	Law	\$142,000	(\$142,000)	\$0
Streetlight General Fund Abandonment	City Light	(\$160,000)		(\$160,000)
Total		\$2,141,660	(\$533,600)	\$1,608,060

Increase Appropriation for Transfer to Revenue Stabilization Fund: SMC 5.80.020.B. requires that 50 percent of any GF ending balance, after subtracting amounts necessary for encumbrances, carryforwards or planned reserves, that is in excess of the ending balance published in the adopted budget be deposited into the Revenue Stabilization Fund (RSF), provided that after the transfer the RSF balance does not exceed the maximum limit of 5 percent of GF tax revenues. This proposed \$396,000 transfer from Finance General to the RSF satisfies these requirements, and when combined with a \$2.3 million transfer included in the 2024 Adopted Budget, brings the RSF balance to a total of \$68 million.

2023 Surcharge from Central Service Departments: This item is a technical adjustment of \$64,000 that reflects the GF share of a total \$721,835 payment from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections to reconcile 2023 internal services charges with actual costs, which were higher than estimated in the revised budget. The balance of the total reconciling payment is proposed to be paid from the Construction and Inspections Fund.

Paramedic Student Training: This item would add \$258,000 GF to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) to facilitate the 2024 portion of paramedic training for 5 firefighters. SFD reports that the current staffing level of 50 Firefighter-Paramedics is approximately 32 personnel short of the department’s targets, resulting in extra shift work requirements for existing staff. The proposed training program would run from October through July and the proposed amount covers the 2024 share of the cost; the 2025 share of the training costs, estimated to be \$602,000, will be requested in the 2025 proposed budget.

Sexual Assault Unit Investments: This item would add \$250,000 GF to the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) Criminal Investigations budget to implement a suite of programs as recommended by the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Sexual Assault and System Reform, as empaneled through [Executive Order 2022-05](#). The Executive envisions this amount as the half year cost of an ongoing program, and anticipates a full year, ongoing request of \$500,000 per year will be included in the Mayor's 2025 Proposed/2026 Endorsed Budget.

SPD Police Recruiting: This item would add \$800,000 GF to SPD to support additional officer recruitment advertisements.

DON/SPU Community Engagement MOA: This item would add \$41,600 GF to the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) to provide community engagement services on behalf of Seattle Public Utilities. Subject to a memorandum of agreement with SPU, DON would be reimbursed for the full cost of these services, resulting in a zero net fiscal impact to the GF.

Dangerous Buildings Abatement: This proposal would add \$350,000 GF to the Seattle Fire Department to contract with vendors to perform building demolitions consistent with provisions in [ORD 127037](#), which amended the Seattle Fire code to clarify the Seattle Fire Chief's authority to demolish or otherwise remedy unsafe building conditions. ORD 127037 also provides for a mechanism to recover costs of these abatements from property owners, including placing a lien on affected property as needed. As such, the Executive submitted this proposed increase with an equivalent revenue offset amount, resulting in a net zero fiscal impact. However, it is important to note that revenues may not be received in the same fiscal year as expenditures occur and could require multi-year support until reimbursement is received, and as such there is not currently a guarantee of financial recovery. The Executive envisions this as an ongoing program, and anticipates a full year, ongoing request of \$500,000 per year will be included in the Mayor's 2025 Proposed/2026 Budget.

Seattle City Light Paralegal: This item would add \$142,000 to the Law Department to support a paralegal to assist with past-due utility accounts in Seattle City Light (SCL). The Law Department will be reimbursed for the full cost of these services, resulting in a zero net fiscal impact to the GF.

Streetlight General Fund Abandonment: This proposal would reduce the Customer Focused CIP program in SCL by \$160,000 GF. This funding was added to SCL in 2022 through Council Budget Action (CBA) SCL-001-B, to support installation of streetlights along certain specific street segments. This work has been completed using City Light Fund monies, and the GF balance is no longer needed.

Policy Consideration – 2024 GF Net Fiscal Impacts

As indicated above, the current GF projection for 2024 shows a negative \$12 million unreserved ending balance, though that amount did not include the impact of the Mayor's hiring freeze and pause on new large contracts, which are estimated to generate up to \$19 million by year's end according to CBO estimates. That said, those are one-time savings, and the 2025 projected GF deficit remains at \$258 million based on the May forecast. With that in mind, the Council may choose to modify or reject one or more of these proposals and reserve funds for use towards the deficit, or for alternate policy priorities this year, with the trade-off that the accompanying work proposed in the ordinance will not be completed as proposed.

In addition to the net fiscal implications to the GF embodied in the items described above, the bill also includes an item with a zero net fiscal impact, which staff is highlighting for Council visibility, as follows:

Transfer from OED Expanded Cleaning to SPU for Clean Cities

This item is a reduction of \$400,000 GF from the Office of Economic Development (OED) and a corresponding GF increase to Seattle Public Utilities, to support SPU's Clean Cities program. This amount was originally added to OED in the 2024 Adopted Budget through [CBA SPU-802-B](#) to provide expanded cleaning services in the Chinatown-International District. To fund this addition to OED, the CBA also reduced funding for SPU's Clean City suite of programs by \$400,000. The funding changes in the CBA were intended to be one-time. This action followed City Council's imposition of a proviso on \$200,000 of OED's GF budget in the 2023 Mid-year Supplemental ([ORD 126876](#)) to provide for expanded cleaning services as part of the Downtown Activation Plan implementation in the Chinatown-International District (CID).

According to the Executive, OED does not need the additional \$400,000 of appropriation authority to provide additional cleaning services in the CID during 2024, as the \$200,000 provided via the 2023 Mid-year supplemental proviso is sufficient. In November 2023, OED entered into an amended contract with the Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA) for use of the \$200,000 in proviso funding. Under the amended contract, the funding is being used to increase cleaning services from six half-days per week to seven full days per week through the end of 2024. When combined with some of the base funding in CIDBIA's 2024 contract, a total of \$280,000 is allocated for CID cleaning services during 2024.

In terms of the increase of appropriation authority back to SPU, the Executive has indicated that SPU would use the \$400,00 in GF appropriations as follows:

- \$100,000 – Recreation Vehicle (RV) Remediation
- \$111,000 – Illegal Dumping
- \$189,000 – Graffiti Abatement

Other Funds Review

In addition to the proposed GF items described above, CB 120618 would decrease total appropriations in other City funds by \$170.2 million. Notable decreases include:

- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Abandonments**

A combined abandonment of \$208 million of carryforward capital budget appropriations, primarily in the City utility funds, of which \$77 million is in the City Light Fund and \$92.1 million is in Seattle Public Utilities' funds. Other significant reductions include \$28.7 million reduction in the 2024 Multipurpose LTGO Bond Fund support to the Office of the Waterfront & Civic Project. These departments indicate that these appropriations are no longer needed, and that approved capital work can be accomplished within the remaining appropriation authority.

- **Office of Housing Grant Abandonments**

Abandonment of \$7 million of carryforward grant appropriations in the Office of Housing (OH), largely to reconcile amounts in the financial system of record with actual awards. According to the City Budget Office (CBO), over time, grant budgets became out of sync with the actual grant amounts, and this abandonment removes excess budget authority. For 2024 and beyond, CBO and OH have aligned grant budgeting with citywide policy on grants, and budget should more closely align with award amounts.

It is important to note that these changes are technical and do not free up financial resources for use on other budget purposes. After accounting for these technical reductions, CB 120618 would increase appropriations to other City funds by approximately \$44.8 million. Noteworthy increases include:

- **Transportation Fund Capital Project Increases:**

A \$22 million increase to multiple projects the Transportation capital budget, the largest of which is a \$9.2 million increase to Bike Master Plan – Protected Bike Lanes Capital Project, funded by a Puget Sound Regional Council grant award backed by the Federal Highways Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, Surface Transportation Block Grant, and Carbon Reduction Program grant programs for federal fiscal year 2025.

Descriptions for other non-GF increases in the bill, which are largely in Sections 2 (operating appropriations) and 7 (capital appropriations) are included in [Attachment A to the Summary and Fiscal Note](#) provided by the Executive.

In addition to the appropriation impacts to other City funds, the bill also imposes a proviso to facilitate the expenditure of existing appropriations, as follows:

Proviso on JumpStart Funds for Student Mental Health

This item would impose a proviso on \$10 million of JumpStart Fund appropriations in the DEEL K-12 Programs Budget Control Level (BCL) to allow these monies to be used “to provide and raise awareness of critical mental health services and student safety interventions, such as proactive mental health screening, telehealth therapy, and in-person therapy for Seattle students, and may not be used for any other purpose.”

As part of the suite of legislation that accompanied the 2024 Adopted Budget, the Council increased the tax rates for businesses subject to the payroll expense tax to increase annual revenues by \$20 million. In tandem, the Council amended the 2024 Proposed Budget increase appropriations to the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) to “expand educational supports at Seattle Public Schools (SPS), prioritizing services that improve mental health outcomes including, but not limited to, school-based mental health counselors and culturally specific and responsive programming from community-based organizations.”

The Council also signaled its intent to amend [Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\) 5.38.055](#) in 2024 to allow for JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax Fund funds to be used for the specified educational support purposes. Absent additional action by the Council to provide the legal authority for DEEL to use the funds for these purposes, the additional revenues would go unspent. An alternative to modifying SMC 5.38.055 is for the Council to impose a proviso on DEEL’s 2024 budget specifying that the funds are appropriated solely for educational supports, which is the approach taken with this proposal.

According to a [press release issued by the Mayor’s Office on June 14, 2024](#), the mental health investment strategy is based on work performed by the City’s Innovation & Performance team during the first six months of the year, including interviews and focus groups, to understand the current state of youth mental health. The team’s work culminated in the issuance of their research report: [A Student-Led Approach to Mental Health Services](#).

The Executive has proposed to use the \$10 million as follows:

- **\$2.0 million – Violence and Prevention**

This funding would be dedicated to youth violence prevention, intervention, and interruption programs, to be administered by the Human Services Department (HSD) via a Memorandum of Agreement with DEEL. HSD plans to host a series of meetings with key stakeholders, including DEEL and other City departments, to help direct the funds. The funds are intended to be spent during the 2024–2025 school year, and they will be spent in collaboration with King County’s [recently announced 100 Days of Action](#) to reduce gun violence.

- **\$2.4 million – Telehealth Services**

This funding is intended to expand student access to telehealth therapy services. Currently, approximately 80 students are accessing telehealth services through a [pilot program](#) offered by HSD’s Youth and Family Empowerment division. The Executive has indicated that the goal of this funding is to expand those telehealth services to 2,000 students, which is the estimated number of students for whom therapy is a good fit and who are not served by other current programs, are open to a government-sponsored service, and are willing to use therapy. DEEL is intending to work with HSD to expand their current contract for telehealth services over the summer and to enter into its own contract for the start of the 2024–2025 school year. DEEL has also issued a [Request for Information](#) to seek additional telehealth contracts in 2025.

- **\$5.6 million – In-Person Mental Health Therapy**

This funding would be passed-through to Public Health – Seattle and King County to increase mental health providers at School-Based Health Centers, mental health case manager/coordinators for student supports, system-wide mental health consultation, training, and evaluation, and to support program management and administration. The Executive has indicated that further refinement of this work will occur when the funds become available.

Lastly, the Executive has stated that the proposal only utilizes half of the original \$20 million allocation because \$10 million represents the amount needed in 2024 to implement the strategies outlined in their spending plan. If the proviso is approved as proposed, the remaining \$10 million in appropriation authority will go unused, and the funds will either remain in the JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax Fund balance and be available for spending in 2025 or future years, or the appropriation could be abandoned, and the monies diverted to other eligible purposes in 2024.

Position Increase Review

In addition to appropriation changes and the proviso noted perviously, CB 120812 would revise approved position totals across City departments. In total, the bill would add 48 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. CB 120812 FTE Position Requests by Department

Department	FTEs
Human Services Department	21
Community Assisted Response and Engagement	21
Seattle Center	6
Total FTE Proposals	48

Position request summaries for these three departments are provided on page 8.

Position Authority in Human Services Department

CB 120812 would add 21 FTE positions related to addressing homelessness, including:

- **1 FTE Executive Assistant and 1 FTE Senior Grants and Contracts Administrator:** These two new positions would support the increased contracting work that will result when \$7.3 million of outreach funding and \$4.1 million of homeless prevention funding and associated contracts are transferred from the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) to HSD, beginning in Q3, 2024. The Executive estimates that \$151,000 will be needed in 2024 to pay for these positions, which would likely not be filled until late 2024. The funding in 2024 comes from unallocated homelessness prevention funds and KCRHA underspend, which was administratively carried forward.

Ongoing funding for the Executive Assistant position will come from existing resources at Seattle Parks and Recreation and HSD. Funding for the Senior Grants and Contracts Administrator, which will only support homelessness prevention contracts, will come from the annual \$2.8 million in the 2023 Housing Levy program funding for homelessness prevention and housing stability.

- **5 FTE Regional Coordinators:** \$811,000 in funding for these five positions was provided in the GF in the 2023 Adopted Budget. While the Executive is requesting approval for permanent positions, HSD has used its existing administrative authority to temporarily hire four of the five positions.
- **14 FTE Counselors:** These positions would support the Unified Care Team's (UCT's) geographic approach to outreach by creating two Counselor positions for each of the 7 UCT regions. These positions would support outreach-led encampment resolutions, provide referrals to shelter during encampment removals and provide support to individuals to move out of immediate hazard/obstruction locations. The \$825,000 needed in 2024 to pay for these positions will come from KCRHA underspend in the GF.

Policy Consideration – Only Partial Information on Future Funding Plan

The total 2025 fully loaded cost for these positions is approximately \$2 million. HSD reduced the amount available for homelessness outreach providers by \$1 million in its recently released Request for Proposals for such services to cover half the total cost. HSD has stated the remaining \$1 million will come from the \$11.4 million of outreach and prevention funding that is being transferred back to HSD and currently budgeted in the GF. However, the Executive will not provide information on what services or programs would receive a reduction and what the impact on service provision would be until budget deliberations. Consequently, Council is being asked to add these positions without having full information about the potential policy impacts of doing so. Approving the positions in the 2024 mid-year supplemental, rather than 2025 budget deliberations, allows the Executive to begin the hiring process four months sooner.

If the Council is interested, Central Staff could develop options that would allow the Executive to begin the hiring process for some or all of the new positions, but not finalize hiring until the Council completes its fall budget process. This would likely slow implementation at least somewhat, so it would create tradeoffs of its own.

Position Authority in Community Assisted Response and Engagement Department

The proposed legislation would add 21 positions to the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department, including 18 FTE Care Responders and 3 FTE Supervisors.

These positions would significantly expand both the size and the ambit of CARE’s crisis response program, which began in October 2023. The new positions would enable the staged rollout of the program expansion from late 2024 through early 2025. Attachment 1 to this memo, “Seattle CARE Department: Citywide Expansion Data,” includes a set of recommendations, generated by the Executive, that substantiate the position requests and explain the intended expansion. The information provided here is based in part on that document.

Current CARE Department staffing includes six Community Crisis Response (CCR) FTE positions and one Crisis Response Manager FTE position. The proposed expansion would support CARE crisis responders’ availability citywide by early 2025. Starting from its existing downtown base, the intent is to expand CARE responders’ service area eastwards, into Capitol Hill and the Central Area most immediately, with North Seattle and South Seattle to be added sequentially. (See pages 11 and 15 of Attachment 1.) Based on Attachment 1, City data, and information provided by the Executive, Central Staff estimates position costs associated with the program expansion would be \$551,000 in 2024, \$3.3 million in 2025, and \$3.5 million in 2026. Central Staff estimates the program expansion will also require one-time non-position costs of \$780,000 and ongoing non-position costs of \$840,000. This estimate does not include the potential costs associated with the establishment and maintenance of additional “station” locations for CARE response teams, which could involve one-time tenant improvements and ongoing lease costs. The Executive has also indicated that the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget will include new administrative positions to support the expanded program, but details about those positions are not available at this time. The costs that can be quantified at this point are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Estimated costs of CARE crisis response program expansion

Year	Position Costs	Non-position Costs	Total
2024	\$551,000	\$600,000	\$1,151,000
2025	\$3,290,000	\$1,230,000	\$4,520,000
2026	\$3,473,000	\$840,000	\$4,313,000

The CARE Department is funded by the GF. Table 4 summarizes the proposed expansion’s total cost for each year and assumes that the one-time start-up costs referenced above are spread evenly across 2024 and 2025.

Policy Consideration - Ongoing Funding Gap for Proposed Expansion

The Executive has identified several one-time funding sources that could fully offset the 2024 costs and some portion of the 2025 costs, including a new \$1.9 million grant from the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance which is included for Council consideration in [CB 120813](#), the Mid-year Grants Acceptance and Appropriation Ordinance, and the reallocation of \$510,000 of existing GF funding currently allocated to help the CARE Department “envision and prepare for future needs”¹. The latter funding had been intended for such purposes as a staffing study, and the establishment of crisis-response program evaluation measures. The Executive’s Participatory Budgeting funding proposal,

¹ See pages 171-172 of the [2023-2024 Adopted Budget](#).

anticipated to be transmitted to Council as legislation in the coming weeks, will also include a \$2 million GF allocation to the CARE Department. In total, \$4.4 million in one-time funding has been identified to support the 10 currently known one-time and ongoing costs of the expanded program. However, an ongoing funding source for the proposed program expansion has not been identified. Absent the identification of such a funding source, the expansion costs will increase the ongoing GF operating deficit.

Policy Consideration – Operational Limitations of CARE Crisis Response Program

Passed by the Council on December 2023, [ORD 126958](#) authorized the execution of a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between the City and the Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG). The MOU addressed SPD staffing issues and established a framework for a “dual-dispatch alternative response” pilot project. The MOU sets a maximum of 24 FTE for the project, not including administrative and supervisory personnel. With the addition of the proposed new positions, that maximum would be reached.

Other elements of the MOU describe the purview of the CARE CCRs – i.e., 9-1-1 dispatched response to certain calls coded by CARE call-takers and dispatchers as “Person Down” and “Welfare Check” – and their permissible interactions with SPD response units. For instance, a CARE response unit and an SPD response unit must be dispatched simultaneously to these call types, with CARE prohibited from approaching the scene of needed response until authorized by SPD. (A CARE response unit may also be dispatched to the scene of SPD response already in progress, at the direct request of SPD.)

The intent of this framework was maximally to protect the safety of the scene and of CARE CCRs. However, in practice it has inhibited CARE response. CARE CCRs can often wait hours in between service opportunities. Between the program’s launch and Mayor Harrell’s announcement of the expansion plan, CCRs participated in the response to around 500 calls, an average of around two calls per day. Other cities that have been able to deliver response at scale to 9-1-1 calls that have a nexus to mental and behavioral health generally have done so via solely dispatched units. As a point of comparison to CCRs’ response figures since October, in April 2024 the Durham, NC Community Response Team provided 651 responses.² The Albuquerque, NM Community Safety Department provided almost 19,000 responses³ in the first six months of 2024, over 14,000 of which it considers to have been diverted from the Albuquerque Police Department.

Another outcome of the current operational constraints on the CARE crisis response program is that limited data exists to support a program evaluation and the development of data-informed program refinements. In late 2022 the Council and the Mayor’s Office collaboratively developed a “[term sheet](#)” to document and scope the parties’ shared interest in alternative response, and it included the following explicit goals:

- Preserve first-responder capacity for appropriate emergency responses; and
- Increase rate of response and timeliness of response to 9-1-1 Priority 3 and Priority 4 calls

² It is not clear that all these responses were dispatched. The top five call types that the Community Response Team (CRT) responded to were Trespass, Non-urgent Welfare Check, Mental Health Crisis, Urgent Welfare Check, and Nuisance or Intoxicated. Each of the three CRT response units are comprised of unarmed, three-person civilian teams.

³ Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) houses a [range](#) of non-police response units. As of April, there were 65 responders in all.

These goals imply an assumption that it would be typical for SPD and CARE response units to arrive on scene together and for SPD to authorize CARE to take control of the scene, with SPD then able to depart and respond to Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls. In practice, this is not happening with any significant frequency, so it is not possible to analyze the degree to which the CARE crisis response program is meeting its goals.

If the Council is interested, Central Staff could develop options to (i) preserve the evaluation funding, and/or (ii) slow the pace of hiring so a full funding commitment is not made until Council can see the overall budget implications. This latter option would potentially delay program expansion, so it creates trade-offs of its own.

Position Authority in Seattle Center

CB 120812 would add 6 FTE Security Officers to enhance public safety on the Waterfront's Overlook Walk, which is scheduled to open in September 2024, ahead of the original timeframe of January 2025. This proposal would bring the total Waterfront security officer staffing to 21 FTEs. In 2024, these new positions will be funded from \$393,000 of existing Seattle Park District (MPD) Fund carryforward appropriations. In the 2025 proposed budget, CBO indicates that the additional ongoing cost of these positions, estimated to be \$972,000, will be funded with new appropriations from the MPD Fund.

Next Steps

The Select Budget Committee will consider amendments, and potentially vote on the bill on Wednesday, August 7, 2024. If the Committee votes on the bill at the August 7 meeting, the legislation will be considered for final action at the August 13, 2024, City Council meeting. Future 2024 budget adjustments will include the year-end comprehensive supplemental adjustment and grant acceptance and appropriation bills, anticipated to be submitted as budget legislation with the Mayor's Proposed 2025/2026 Budget in late September, and any other stand-alone supplemental bills necessary to address unforeseen circumstances, consistent with [RCW 35.32A.060](#).

Attachments

1. Seattle CARE Department: Citywide Expansion Data