The City of Seattle

Resolution 32205

A resolution affirming the importance of Seattle Center as a central civic, cultural, and economic asset for The City of Seattle; acknowledging the urgent imperative to restore its aging infrastructure and grounds, renovate its buildings, and revitalize the Seattle Center Campus; requesting that the Mayor direct City departments in a capital planning effort for Seattle Center; anticipating a decision on a bond measure to fund its capital investment by the end of 2027; committing to exploring all viable funding options to support its modernization; declaring Council priorities and calling upon the Executive to direct departmental resources and budget allocations in support of its capital improvements.

Be it resolved by the City Council of The City of Seattle, the Mayor concurring:

Section 1. The City finds and declares:

A. Seattle Center is one of the City's most iconic and widely used public spaces, serving as a hub for arts, culture, education, entertainment, sports, and community gathering.

B. Since its origin as the site of the 1962 World's Fair, Seattle Center has grown into a campus that supports over 30 partner organizations, major events, and millions of annual visitors each year.

C. Seattle Center plays an important role in supporting the city's cultural life, economic activity, and neighborhood vitality.

D. Seattle Center welcomed 11.3 million visitors in 2025, making it the most visited arts and cultural destination in the Pacific Northwest.

E. Economic impact analysis shows that Seattle Center generated nearly $3.3 billion in total economic output in 2024, supporting 19,400 jobs and nearly $1.1 billion in labor income across King County — while also generating more than $37 million annually in local tax revenue.

F. The Seattle Center Strategic Vision and 10-Year Action Plan, published June 2025, sets forth three key goals to enable a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future for Seattle Center's civic campus, one of which is to boldly reinvest in Seattle Center's public spaces.

G. While significant private investment has been made on the Seattle Center campus in recent years, including Climate Pledge Arena, Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Fisher Pavilion, and Memorial Stadium, major campus-wide public investment in this cherished public asset has not occurred since 1991.

H. In 1991, Seattle voters approved a $25,800,000 levy for implementation of the Seattle Center 2000 Master Plan, matched by $8.5 million in state funds.

I. In 1999, Seattle voters approved Proposition 1 providing $36 million for Marion Oliver McCaw Hall and Fisher Pavilion.

J. In 2022, Seattle voters approved the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) Buildings, Technology, and Academics/Athletics capital levy (BTA V) that is expected to raise $783 million over six years from 2023 to 2028.

K. SPS will invest $66.5 million from BTA V funding in partnership with $40 million from The City of Seattle, and nearly $4 million from the State of Washington, to replace Memorial Stadium on the Seattle Campus.

L. In addition, One Roof Sports and Entertainment has committed $5 million and is leading efforts to raise additional private funding needed for the Memorial Stadium project.

M. Memorial Wall, a designated Seattle Landmark which honors 762 local high school students and alumni who lost their lives in World War II, will be preserved and enhanced as part of the Memorial Stadium replacement project.

N. In April 2026, the Council with the Mayor concurring adopted Resolution 32198 affirming The City of Seattle's readiness for a National Basketball Association (NBA) team; declaring that Climate Pledge Arena is ready for an NBA team; and affirming Seattle is a basketball city.

O. A significant portion of Seattle Center's facilities and underlying infrastructure is more than 50 years old, and many systems—including building envelopes, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, as well as accessibility and life-safety features—are nearing or have exceeded their useful life.

P. Preliminary assessments and ongoing maintenance experience indicate that capital backlog needs at Seattle Center are substantial and growing, with the potential to impact facility reliability, program delivery, public safety, and the overall visitor experience if not addressed over time.

Q. Without a coordinated, long-term investment strategy, the City may face increasing costs associated with emergency repairs, service disruptions, and the gradual degradation of key cultural and civic assets.

R. The scale and complexity of Seattle Center's capital needs suggest that a phased and strategic approach—grounded in clear priorities and informed by updated technical assessments—will be necessary to guide future decision-making.

S. The City has an interest in developing a clearer understanding of Seattle Center's long-term capital needs, potential priorities, and sequencing of investments.

T. A range of potential funding strategies may be available to support future improvements, including partnerships, phased investments, and a potential future voter-approved bond measure.

U. Voter-approved bonds provide a means to distribute the costs over time, reduce current year financial impacts, and make possible significant capital investments.

V. Capital investment in Seattle Center is anticipated to support on-going employment opportunities, generate income for local businesses, create construction jobs, utilize locally-sourced labor and materials, and advance labor equity goals – such as identifying projects that will include the use of Community Workforce Agreements, with apprenticeship and priority hire provisions and incorporating project labor agreements.

Section 2. The City reaffirms the importance of Seattle Center as a central civic, cultural, and economic asset for The City of Seattle, and acknowledges the urgent imperative to restore its aging infrastructure and grounds, renovate its buildings, and revitalize the Seattle Center Campus.

Section 3. The Council requests that the Executive direct the coordinated effort of City departments including Seattle Center, City Budget Office, Department of Transportation, Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and others to:

A. Assess Seattle Center's long-term capital and infrastructure needs;

B. Identify priority projects necessary to maintain safety, accessibility, and operational continuity;

C. Consider areas for modernization of facilities, amenities, and other capital assets to ensure Seattle Center's continued usefulness and longevity;

D. Engage with people who live, work, and play at Seattle Center's facilities and grounds and in the adjacent neighborhoods of Uptown, Queen Anne, South Lake Union, and Belltown to inform prioritizing and timing of potential projects; and

E. Develop ongoing approaches to future investments that reflect both urgency and fiscal constraints.

Section 4. The Council requests that Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities collaborate with Seattle Center and other relevant departments to advance projects that decarbonize Seattle Center's operations and maintenance, modernize infrastructure, and enhance Seattle Center's applications for competitive grants and legislative appropriations, especially Climate Commitment Act funding from Washington State.

Section 5. The Council intends to consider and take action on future legislation to place a bond measure on the ballot for voter approval by the end of 2027 to support Seattle Center capital investment. The Council further intends that such a bond measure would condition the amount of bond issuance, up to the maximum specified in the bond measure, upon commensurate funding from private and other non-City sources.

Section 6. The City will explore all viable funding options to support capital investment in Seattle Center in tandem with a voter-approved capital bond measure by the end of 2027, including:

A. Existing capital funding sources;

B. County, state and federal grants;

C. Public and private partnerships; and

D. Partnership with SPS in the Seattle Center Armory renovation related to the Center School.

Section 7. Going forward, the Council intends to develop annual budgets that invest in Seattle Center to ensure a high return on investment for the next 60-plus years. The Council will balance allocations to Seattle Center capital needs with other City priorities in the context of the City's contemporary financial condition and long-term fiscal sustainability. In setting these budgets, the Council intends to consider the impacts of City taxes, levies, and bonds on affordability.

Section 8. The Council requests that the Mayor transmit a 2027 – 2028 Proposed Budget to the Council that includes appropriations and position authority sufficient to move Seattle Center capital projects toward the construction phase. Examples include:

A. Achieving 30-percent design for the project to modernize the Seattle Center Armory;

B. Public engagement and scoping for an expanded Veterans Memorial in a prominent location in Seattle Center to honor all of Seattle's fallen and missing-in-action service members from all armed global conflicts; and

C. Contracting with contractors that have expertise with union partnerships and a demonstrated history of compliance with all labor laws.

Adopted by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its adoption on June 9, 2026.

President __________ of the City Council

Signed in concurrence on June 12, 2026.

Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Attested on June 12, 2026.

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

Seal