



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Budget Reform: Process and Content

BEN NOBLE, CALVIN CHOW, & TOM MIKESELL, CITY COUNCIL CENTRAL STAFF

FINANCE, NATIVE COMMUNITIES & TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

JUNE 4, 2025

2025 Budget Calendar

- Council's Budget Review Process begins Tuesday, September 23, with the transmittal of the Mayor's 2026 Proposed budget.
- Final City Council action is scheduled for Friday, November 21.
- Key changes from last year – aimed at enhancing transparency and public engagement:
 1. The initial public hearing is shifted back a week+ to provide an earlier opportunity for Councilmembers to hear from their constituents.
 2. Additional phase added after Central Staff analytic summaries and before the Chair's balancing package is presented.

This phase will allow all Councilmembers and the public to hear about the full range of potential amendments under consideration. This will also provide additional context for Council's consideration of the balancing package and any subsequent amendments. These proposals will mark the first step of potential budget amendments and will thus require 2 co-sponsors.

Seattle City Council **Fall 2025 Select Budget Committee Calendar**













LEGEND
















Written Public Comment



Oral Public Comment

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Week 1	22 September Rosh Hashanah Begins	23 Mayor Transmits 2026 Proposed Budget Adjustments City Council 2 p.m.	24 Rosh Hashanah Ends	25  	26 
				CBO Overview & Department Presentations 2026 Proposed Budget Adjustments 9:30 a.m. each day	
Week 2	29 September 	30 	1 October Yom Kippur begins	2 Yom Kippur ends	3
	Department Presentations 2026 Proposed Budget Adjustments 9:30 a.m. each day				
Week 3	6 October	7  	8	9	10
		Public Hearing 5 p.m.			
Week 4	13 October Indigenous Peoples' Day	14	15  	16 	17 
			Central Staff Presentation: Policy Considerations 9:30 a.m. each day		
Week 5	20 October 	21	22	23	24
	Revenue Forecast Update 9:30 a.m. Policy Considerations 2 p.m.	Initial CM Proposals Due @ Noon (2 co-sponsors req'd)			

Week 6	27 October	28  	29 	30 	31
		Discussion of Councilmember Budget Proposals 9:30 a.m. each day			
Week 7	3 November	4 Election day	5 	6  	7 CM Self-Balanced Amendments due @ Noon (2 co-sponsors req'd)
			Chair's Balancing Package 9:30 a.m.	Public Hearing 5 p.m.	
Week 8	10 November	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14  
					Committee Vote 9:30 a.m.
Week 9	17 November 	18	19	20 	21  
	Committee Vote 9:30 a.m.			Final Committee Vote 9:30 a.m.	Special City Council Meeting Final Action on Budget Time TBD
Week 10	24 November	25 General Election Certified	26	27 Thanksgiving Holiday	28 Thanksgiving Holiday

Additional Budget Process Changes

- In the “Discussion of Councilmember Budget Proposals” (Proposals) phase, Councilmember proposed amendments will be published to their respective agenda 24 hours prior to the scheduled committee meeting.
- A document outlining basic information of proposed amendments will be posted publicly prior to committee meetings for the Proposals phase (Oct. 28, 29, 30), the Chair’s Balancing Package (Nov. 5), and Committee Vote Phase (Nov. 14, 17, 20).

The document will be updated to reflect any changes in amendment sponsorships made in open session.

- As budget amendment proposals are brought to the committee for discussion, Councilmembers will be able to add their names as sponsors.
- Every effort will be made to publish the Chair’s balancing package online 48 hours before the second public hearing.

Updated ~~Five~~ Six-Year Budget “Look Back”

- Last year Central Staff provided the “new” Council a detailed analytic assessment of how the City’s budget had evolved over the previous five years and the key drivers of budget changes over that time.
- This was designed to provide background and context as Council took on managing the significant imbalance between ongoing General Fund expenditures and revenues.
- Ahead of this Fall’s Council Budget Review process, Central Staff is working to update this analysis.
- Our approach is to take last year’s overview as the “base” document, and to add relevant observations about additional changes made last year.

Continuing to Track Budget-Related SLIs

SLI #	Title
CBO-002S-A-1	Request that CBO collaborate with SDHR to report on developing or enhancing programs for City employees subject to layoff.
CBO-003S-A-2	Request that CBO report on past budget underspend and grants
CBO-004S-A-1	Request that CBO and SCERS analyze an early retirement incentive for City employees.
MO-002S-A-1	Request that the Executive provide an inventory of City-funded youth programs.
ITD-002S-A-1	Request that the Executive collaborate with the City Council to establish an advisory workgroup to explore alternative financing and operating models for the Seattle Channel to ensure its long-term sustainability
OH-004S-A-1	Request that OH explore use of bonds and master leasing for development of affordable housing.

Next Steps: Upcoming Budget-related Legislation & Activities

- Exceptions Ordinance and Bond Repayment Legislation
- Carry-forward Ordinance
- Mid-year Supplemental Ordinance
- Discussion of Revenue Options
- August Revenue Forecast