



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL  
**CENTRAL STAFF**

# **2019-2026 BUDGET REVIEW UPDATE & 2026 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET REVIEW**

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EDIN SISIC, ANALYST

FINANCE, NATIVE COMMUNITIES, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS COMMITTEE

MARCH 3, 2026

# Agenda

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**1. Budget Review Document Update**      2019-2026 Citywide Budget Changes



**2. 2026 Legislative Budget Report**      Council Changes to the 2026 Proposed Budget

# 2019-2026 Budget Review

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## Purpose

- Update to the prior document to include 2026 Adopted Budget
- Show how and why expenditures changed over the past 7 years

## Process

- Review expenditure changes by department and Budget Summary Level (BSL)
- Identify key drivers of growth and structural changes
- Focus is on General Fund and JumpStart (all other sources grouped together)

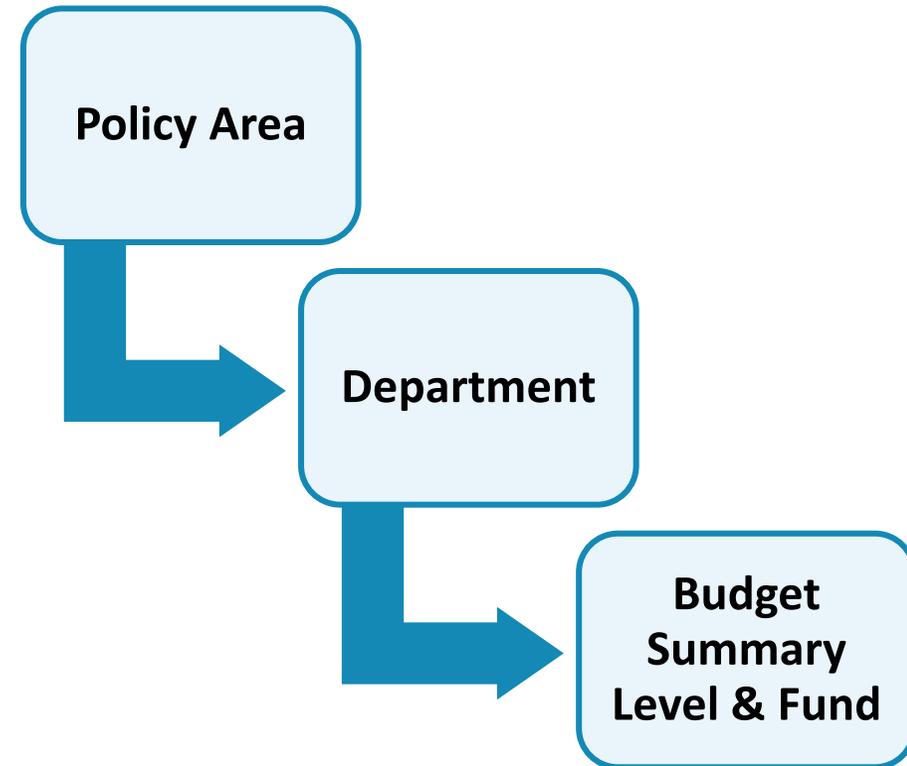
## Structure & Approach

- Begins with a citywide overview, then shifts to department-by-department analysis
- Compares appropriations at the BSL level across the General Fund, JumpStart Fund, and Other Sources
- Uses 2019 as the baseline year (unless impractical due to departmental reorganization)

# What You Will Find Inside – Department Detail

Department summaries include the following\*

- **Summary Table** – Highlights growth over the past seven years at the Budget Summary Level (BSL).
- **Bar chart** – Visualizes departmental changes at the fund level, with emphasis on the GF and JSF.
- **Narrative Summary** – Explains key drivers of budget growth beyond standard inflationary increases.
- **Labor Budget & FTE Table** – Table documents change in labor costs and employee count, and narrative highlights any notable changes.



\*This document was produced by the entire CS team hence department narratives will vary in writing style, and the level of detail and information provided will vary based on how individual analysts determines what best describes and highlights key information about that department's budgets.

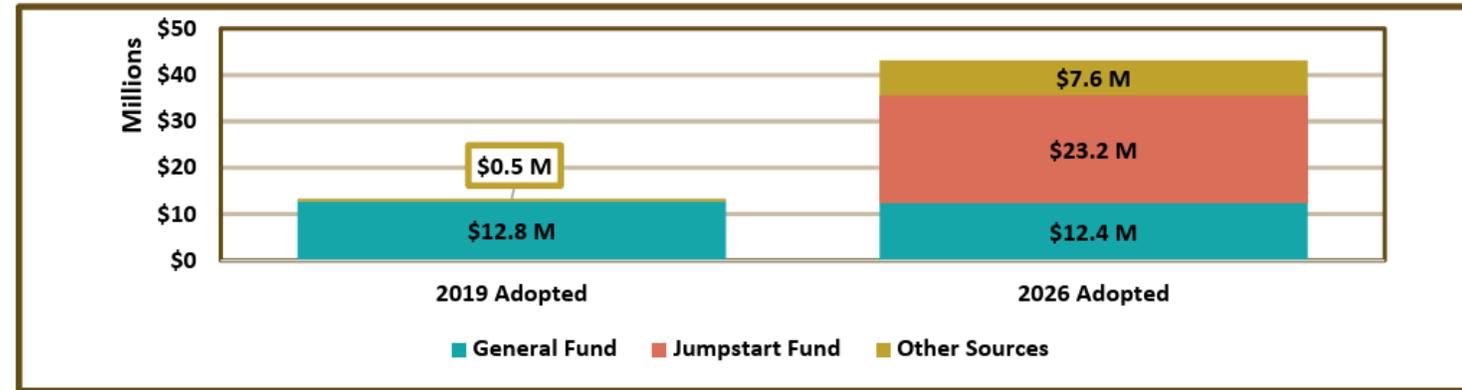
# Departmental Charts Example

## Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

### DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW BY BUDGET SUMMARY LEVEL (BSL)

BSL	2019 BUDGET	2026 BUDGET	7-YEAR CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
Design Commission	\$0.5M	\$1.0M	\$0.5M	83.3%
Planning & Community Dev.	\$12.8M	\$11.7M	(\$1.1M)	(8.3%)
Equitable Development Initiative	\$0.0M	\$30.5M	\$30.5M	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13.3M</b>	<b>\$43.2M</b>	<b>\$29.9M</b>	<b>224.4%</b>

Chart 1. Office of Planning and Community Development 2019 & 2026 Adopted Budgets



### DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW - LABOR / FTEs

	2019 BUDGET	2026 BUDGET	7-YEAR CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
Labor	\$6.4M	\$10.4M	\$4.0M	62%
FTEs	44	51	7	15%

Note: Cumulative CPI over this period is 30%

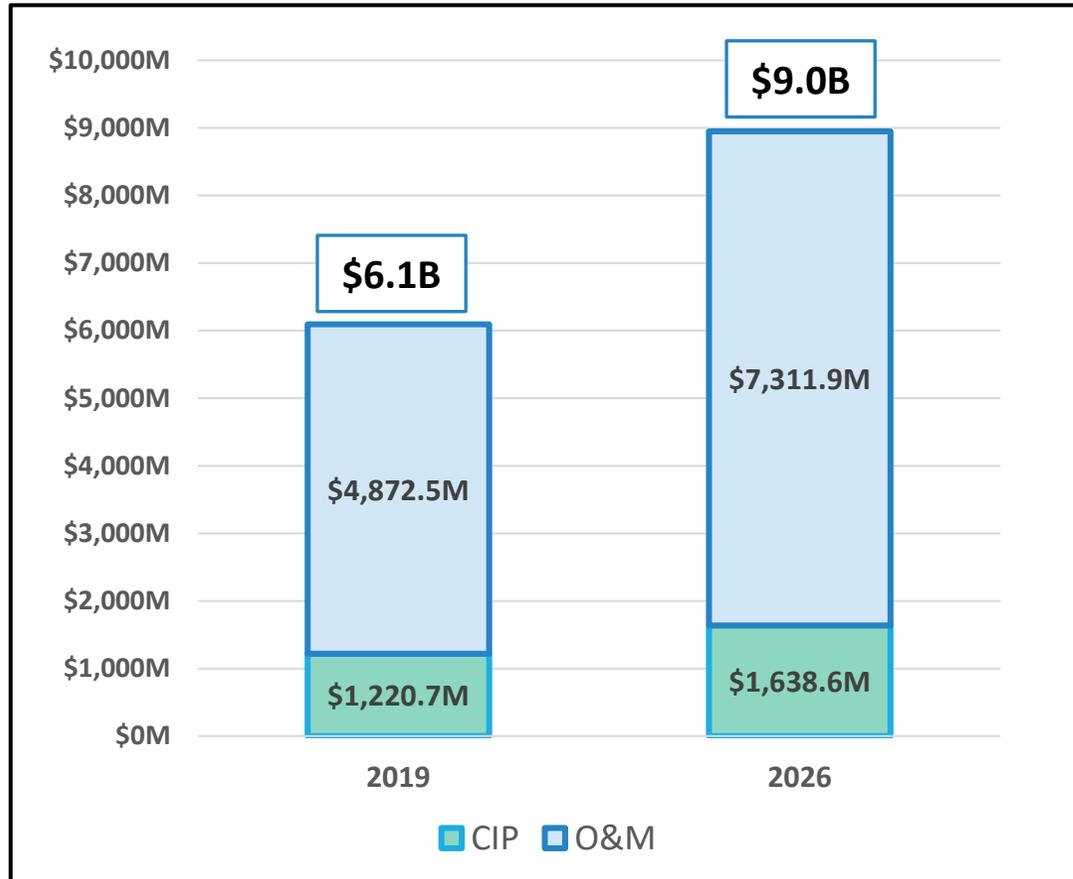
# Policy Areas

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The Executive presents the annual budget with departments grouped into six policy areas. For ease of reference between documents, department pages in the *2019-2026 Budget Review* document are organized using the same groupings (presented alphabetically within the policy area):

- 1. Administration (includes citywide policy and leadership)**
- 2. Arts, Culture & Recreation**
- 3. Education & Human Services**
- 4. Livable & Inclusive Communities**
- 5. Public Safety**
- 6. Utilities, Transportation & Environment**

# 2019-2026 Budget Summary – O&M/CIP



**Overall Increase: \$2.9 Billion (47%)\***

- +\$2.4B (50%) Operating
- +\$417M (34%) CIP

**Average Annual Increase: \$400 million (6.7%)**

- Double-counts \$211 million JSF transfer to the GF; if excluded the annual increase is \$378 million (6.2%).

**Labor Budget Increase: \$1.1B (55%)**

- 1,241 new FTEs (10%)

# Primary Drivers of Growth (2019-2026)

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## **Inflationary Cost Increases**

- Higher costs for programs, services, capital projects
- Rising personnel and internal service costs
- Seattle-area CPI up 30 percent (2019–2025)

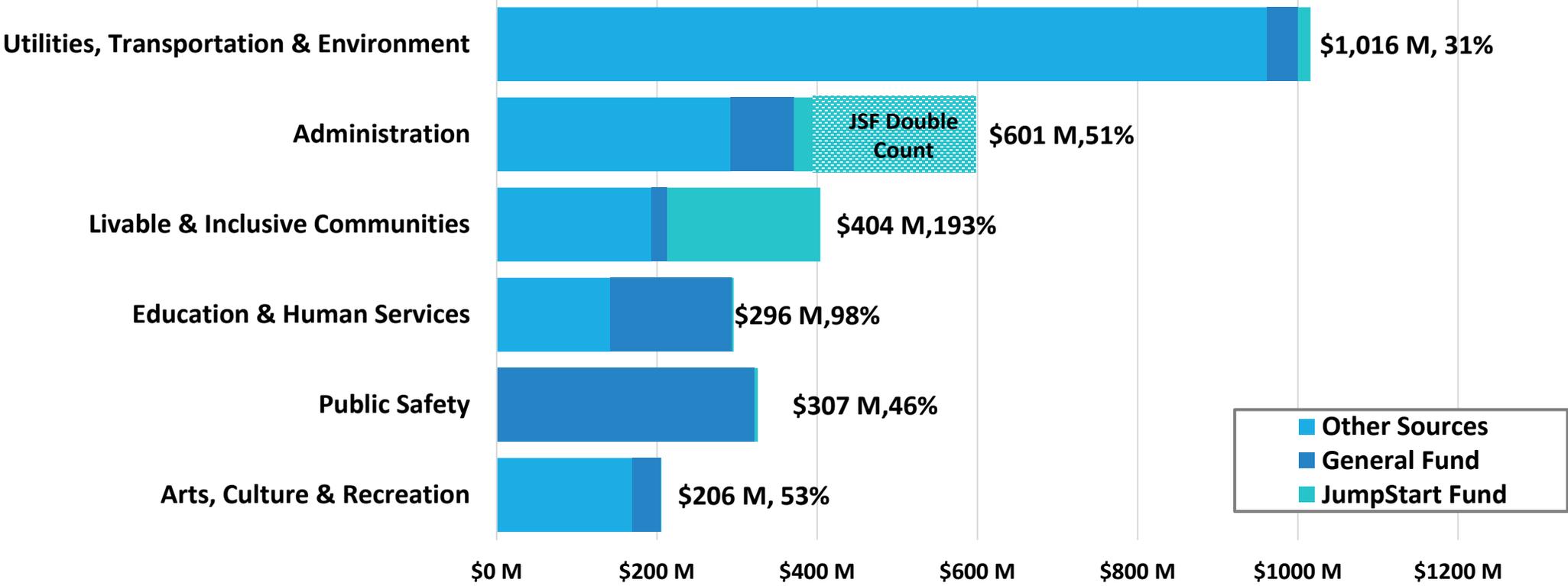
## **New & Expanded Programs Supported by New Revenue**

- JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax contributes 15 percent of \$2.9B growth
- New & Expanded voter-approved funding propositions add \$500 million of new resources
- Additional \$125M GF revenue from B&O restructuring and Local Sales Tax increase (2026)

## **Expanded Services for a Growing Population**

- City population grew from 724,000 in 2019 to 816,000 in 2025 – a 13 percent increase
- Population growth drives utility budgets, housing demand, and service level pressures

# Budget Growth by Policy Area Since 2019



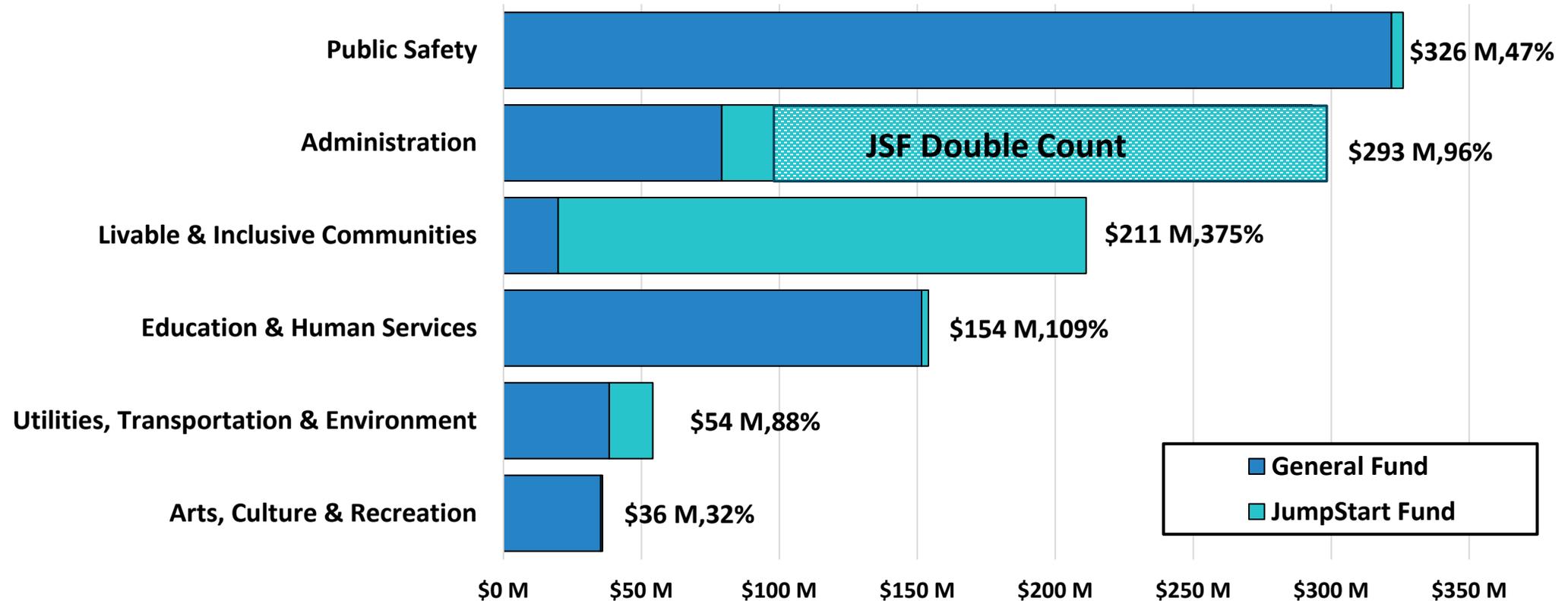
\*Administration Category includes the \$211M JumpStart Transfer to the General Fund, internal services, policy and oversight, debt service, insurance premiums, public safety pre-LEOFF 2 pensions, and reserves.

# Budget Growth by Policy Area Since 2019 (cont.)

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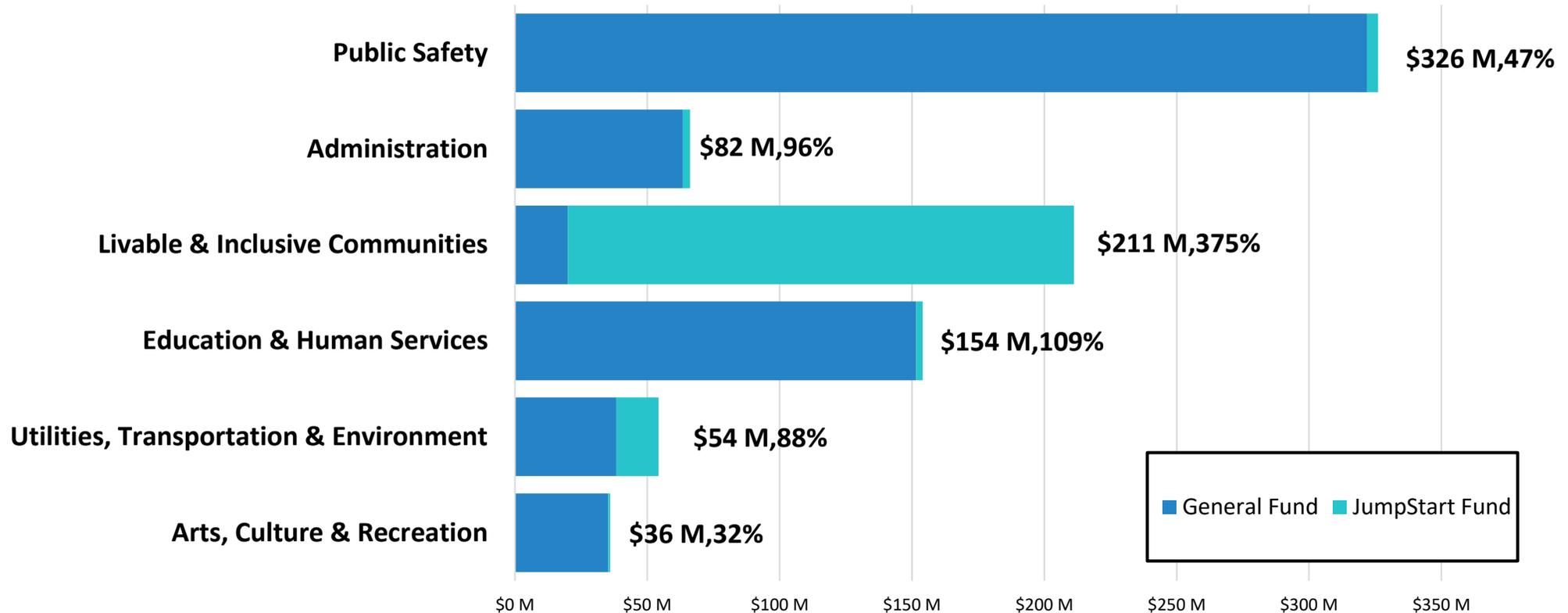
- **Livable & Inclusive Communities:** +193 percent — Driven by JumpStart Fund investments in housing, economic development, and equitable development.
- **Education & Human Services:** +98 percent — Growth from expanded homelessness services and levy-backed early learning and education programs.
- **Arts, Culture & Recreation:** +147 percent — Increase tied to Seattle Park District funding rise from \$55M (2019) to \$136M (2026).
- **Administration:** +51 percent — Increase largely due to JumpStart Fund transfers to the General Fund.
- **Public Safety:** +46 percent — Growth driven by creation of the CARE department and labor contract increases for Police and Fire.
- **Utilities, Transportation & Environment:** Largest dollar growth due to representing nearly half of total city spending.

# GF & JSF Budget Growth by Policy Area Since 2019



\*Administration Category includes the \$211M JumpStart Transfer to the General Fund, internal services, policy and oversight, debt service, insurance premiums, public safety pre-LEOFF 2 pensions, and reserves.

# GF & JSF Budget Growth by Policy Area Since 2019



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# GF & JSF Budget Growth by Policy Area Since 2019 (cont.)

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Since 2019, total GF City budget increased by \$646 million or 47 percent. Approximately 70 percent of this growth is in four departments:

- **Human Services (\$165 million):** Addressing Homelessness and Safe & Thriving Communities BSLs.
- **Fire Department (\$131 million):** Personnel cost increases, including expanded alternative response investments and increased staffing for new West Seattle response vehicles.
- **Police Department (\$85 million):** Officer compensation
- **Community Assisted Response & Engagement (\$51 million)\*:** 911 Call Center transfer, Crisis Response Unit launch, Community Crisis Responders expansion, additional staffing, and HSD transfer (LEAD, Co-LEAD, Third Avenue Project).

Excluding the \$211 million JSF-to-GF transfer in Finance General, the Office of Housing's \$142 million allocation represents roughly two-thirds of the remaining JSF budget that supports Multifamily Housing and Homeownership & Sustainability programs.

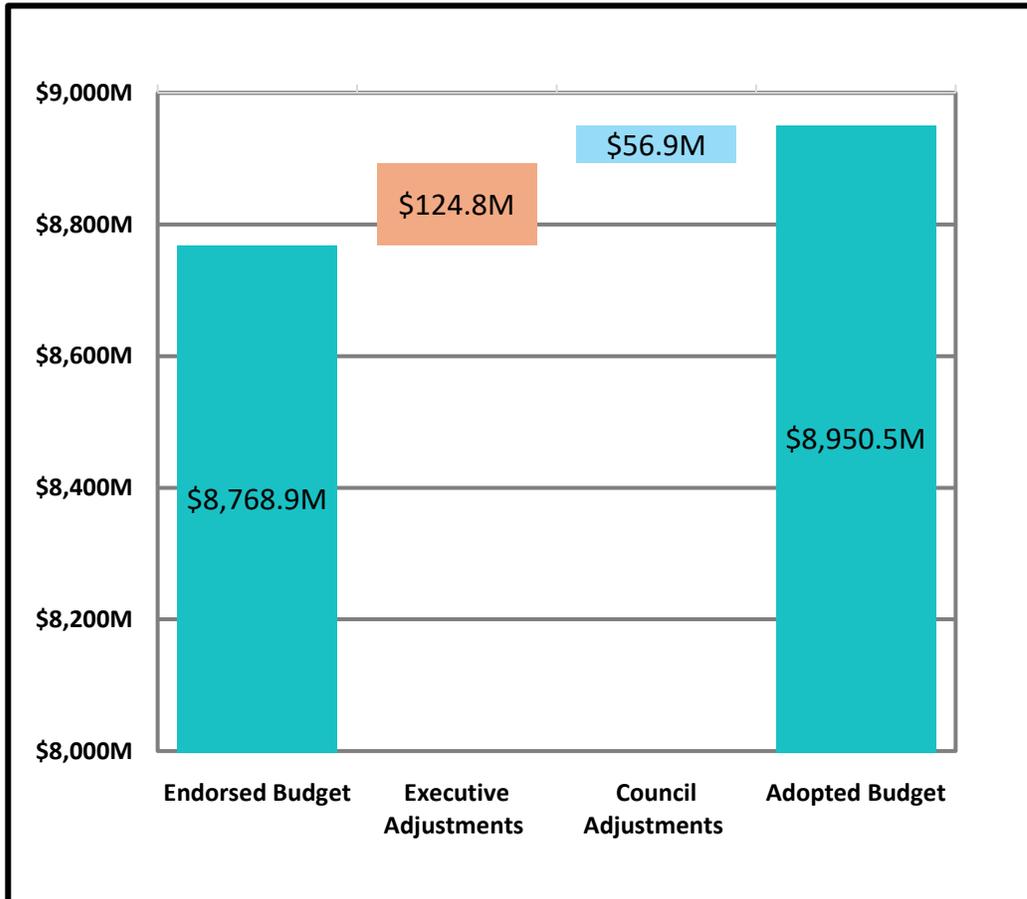
\*CARE was established in 2021; therefore, all budget growth calculations use 2021 as the base year.

# 2026 Legislative Budget Report

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- On November 21, 2025, the Seattle City Council passed Ordinance 127362, adopting the City's 2026 Budget.
- This Legislative Budget Report summarizes Council changes to the Mayor's proposed budget, including:
  - Appropriation and position changes,
  - Provisos, and
  - Statements of Legislative Intent (SLIs)

# 2026 Legislative Budget Report



- Executive adjustments increased the budget by \$124.8M.
- Council adjustments added \$56.9M.
- Combined, these adjustments increased total resources from \$8.77B (endorsed) to \$8.95B (adopted).
- 1.7 percent increase compared to 2026 Endorsed Budget (4.4 percent over 2025 Adopted).
- Council’s budget increases were funded by existing fund cash balances, Council budget actions, and increased revenue forecast (\$30.3 million).

**Questions?**