SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

December 8, 2025

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Governance, Accountability, and Economic Development Committee
From: Amanda Allen, Analyst
Subject: CB 1201141, Civil Service Classification Changes

On December 11, 2025, the Governance, Accountability, and Economic Development (GAED) Committee will discuss and possibly vote on Council Bill (CB) 1201141 which would propose changes to the civil service status of five positions per the requirements of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 4.13.010, which maintains the official list of positions and titles exempt from civil service protections. This memo provides a high-level summary of the bill and identifies next steps.

Summary

City positions are either exempt from Civil Service rules or non-exempt. An "exempt employee" means one who serves at the discretion of the appointing authority in a position exempt from Civil Service Rules.[1] The Council authorizes certain City personnel actions through ordinances. This ordinance would authorize the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) Director to implement the following personnel actions:

1. Exempt one position from civil service, and
2. Return four positions to civil service

Financial Impacts

Council's approval of CB 1201141 would not have immediate fiscal impacts. Compensation changes related to implementation of these personnel actions would be subject to the appointing authority (i.e., head of department) and any necessary increase in a department's budget would require separate legislation. None are proposed through this legislation and departments are expected to absorb any salary changes within their existing budgets.

The City Budget Office (CBO) provided information on the potential associated costs of the reclassifications (revised job titles) by comparing the difference in mid-point salary and benefits between the initial and the final classification of the roles. The information indicates net salary savings which departments anticipate redeploying to higher priority uses. More information in Tables 1 and 2 (pg. 2).

[1] Civil service exempt positions serve at the discretion of the appointing authority and are exempt from the City Charter or Chapter 4.13 from compliance with this Chapter 4.04 regarding selection, discipline, and discharge of employees, and appeals of personnel actions to the Civil Service Commission.

Overview of Changes Proposed

Exempt Four Positions from Civil Service

The SDHR Director determined that the body of work of one position meets the criteria for an automatic civil service exemption under SMC 4.13.010 and recommends exempting this position from the civil service system. The SDHR Director's recommendation for this exemption would only take effect upon approval by two-thirds vote of the Council. Attachment 1 to the ordinance summary and fiscal note provides an overview of the position changes and a summary of how the role has changed; Table 1 provides an overview of the proposed exemption.

Table 1. Position Exempted from Civil Service

	Department	Initial Classification (Civil Service)	Final Classification (Exempt)	Vacancy Status
1	SDHR	Strategic Advisor 3, General Government	Manager 3, Exempt	Vacant
Note: Both classifications share an identical pay band and would not necessarily require a pay increase for the final classification, once the position is filled				

Return Four Positions to the Civil Service System from Exempt Status

Requesting departments, with SDHR's engagement as an advisor, determined that four positions no longer met the criteria for civil service exemption and recommend returning these positions to the civil service system. Attachment 1 to the ordinance summary and fiscal note provides the rationale to return these positions to civil service system; Table 2 provides an overview of the position changes.

Table 2. Positions Returned to Civil Service

	Department	Initial Classification (Exempt)	Final Classification (Civil Service)	Vacancy Status
1	City Attorney's Office (CAO)	Executive Assistant	Paralegal – Law	Vacant
2	SDHR	Manager 2, Exempt	Manager 2, General Government	Filled
3	Seattle City Light (SCL)	Info Technol Prof A, Exempt	Strategic Advisor 1, Utilities L21C SCL	Vacant
4	Seattle City Light	Strategic Advisor 1, Exempt	Manager 2, General Government	Filled
Note: By comparing the salary midpoints for these classifications, the overall cost difference across the three departments could be a reduction of about ($50,000). The estimated CAO cost difference is ($37,600). There is no cost difference for SDHR. The estimated SCL cost difference is ($11,500). Departments will retain any savings and absorb any increases, depending on how the positions are filled within the respective Pay Zones.				

Next Steps

If the Council votes to approve Council Bill 1201141, SMC Section 4.13.010 would be amended to reflect an updated list of positions exempted from the civil service system.

Please contact Amanda Allen if you have questions about the proposed legislation.

cc: Ben Noble, Director
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