

Seattle IT Department Q1-Q2 2026 Artificial Intelligence Usage Report

Governance & Utilities Committee

July 29, 2026

Presentation Agenda:

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3-7	AI Report Background and Responsible AI Program Overview
8	AI Intake & Review Process
9-20	Response to Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) ITD-010S-A • AI Usage by Departments • Lessons Learned • AI Partnerships • Workforce Upskilling and Education • Financial Costs



Report Background & Purpose of Briefing

- In 2025, the City Council adopted a 2026 Statement of Legislative Intent (ITD-010S-A-2) requesting Seattle IT provide a series of reports on the City's investments in, and use of, Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Information Requested:
 - Usage of AI across City departments
 - Financial costs
 - Plans for partnerships
 - Significant lessons learned from prior testing and pilot projects
 - *Workforce upskilling and education (**not stated in SLI, but including as part of updates*)
- **2026 Reports** ([posted online](#)): Q1 (4/01/26), Q2 (7/01/26), Q3 (10/01/26), and Q4 (12/31/26)



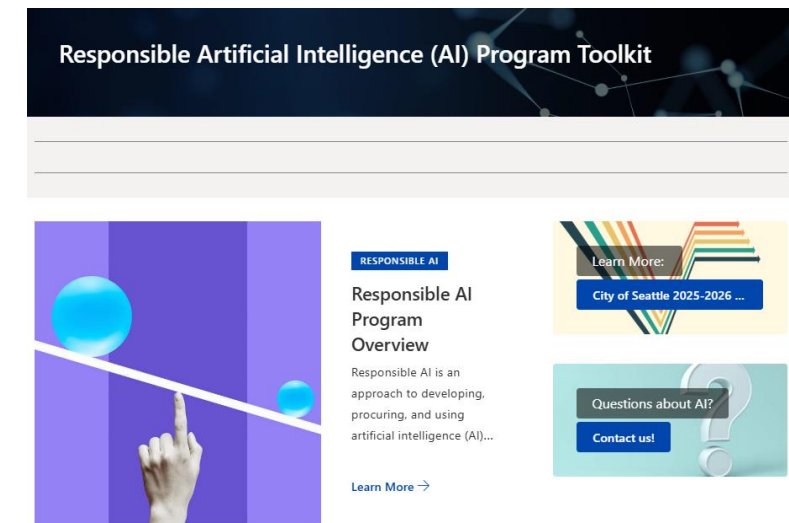
Responsible AI Program

- **Responsible AI Program:** Upholding the City's commitments to Responsible AI Principles, through partnership, policy, and practice, as we innovate with powerful new AI technologies. To ensure responsible use of AI, the City has established guiding principles and policies, along with actionable guidelines and programs to assist City employees in using AI ethically and effectively.
- **AI Principles, Policy, Plan, and Vision:**
 - [Generative AI Responsible Principles Policy](#) – October 2023
 - [Artificial Intelligence Policy \(POL-211\)](#) – Updated May 2025
 - [2025-2026 AI Plan](#) – September 2025
 - [Mayor Wilson's AI Vision](#) – May 2026
- **City AI Officer:** Lisa Qian (Seattle's first-ever City AI Officer)
- **Public Website:** seattle.gov/tech/data-privacy/the-citys-responsible-use-of-artificial-intelligence



Responsible AI Program – Governance

- **Responsible AI Toolkit for City Departments/Employees:** One-stop shop for questions, training resources, list of approved AI software, current AI pilots, intake resources, and FAQs.
- **Responsible AI (RAI) Review:** All AI software and pilots must pass a review with the RAI team that checks for data retention and privacy impacts, human oversight and autonomy levels, racial equity, bias, discrimination risks, and overall compliance with the City AI polity.
- **Mayor’s Information Technology Subcabinet (MITS) AI Workgroup:** Direction from the Mayor’s Office, Seattle IT, and departments; review, recommend, and provide go/no-go decisions on AI projects/investments.



AI Strategic Alignment

- AI tools aligned with the civic priorities (*improving service delivery and fostering innovation*) defined by the Mayor, City Council, & departments.
- Help accelerate permitting, improve public and transportation safety, improve customer service tools, enable more accessible and plain-language communications, and Digital Workplace tools for City employees (*e.g., Copilot Chat is an optional new tool for employees to use*).
- AI technologies are evaluated through a "Proof of Value" framework that prioritizes City impact, cost, and operational experience/outcome.
- Working with business, labor, and community leaders to develop City-led public policies to ensure our residents and workers have the protections we need as the AI field expands.



AI & Environmental Impact

- While we are committed to innovating and being leaders in using AI, we also know that AI's rapid pace of innovation, exponential growth and demand for resources have raised significant concerns about its potential negative impact on the environment.
- AI can be incredibly beneficial to our city, but delivering those benefits requires careful consideration of impacts on our workforce and environment. [On May 1, Mayor Wilson announced specific next steps to begin to address those concerns.](#)
- On June 9th, the Seattle City Council adopted [Council Bill 121214](#) and [Resolution 32204](#) to enact a one-year moratorium on new large data centers and commit to studying the impact.
- Below are links to information and resources to help understand the environmental impact.
 - [Energy](#)
 - [Water](#)
 - [Community Health](#)



AI Intake & Review Process

- **All AI Pilots, Proofs of Concept (PoC), and requests for AI software are required to go through the Ask for New Technology (AFNT) service request process.**
- **AI Triage Review:** All submissions are reviewed by the AI Officer (and if necessary, members of AI Review Group) for (1) business value, (2) value of AI in solution, (3) privacy and security risk, and (4) redundancy of technology. Requests that do not meet the bar may be denied, deferred, or redirected at this stage.
- **Approved requests progress to Architecture, Privacy, and Cybersecurity assessments.**
- **Pilots & PoCs** must include an evaluation plan to assess business value prior to launch and a post-pilot report upon completion.
- **MITS AI Workgroup** holds final decision-making authority over the City's AI portfolio and investments, and is informed at key stages of the review process.



AI Usage Across City Departments

- Based on information through June 30, 2026.
- Outside of Copilot Chat which is available to all departments, 20 departments are currently using approved AI software and 21 departments are not using any approved AI software.
- **Approved AI Software (not pilots):**
 - **Active Use = 21**
 - **In Project Phase (will be used) = 4**
 - No longer used = 9
 - **Requested and under IT Review = 7**
- **AI Pilots / Proofs of Concept**
 - **Executing or about to begin = 5**
 - Completed = 9
 - Paused/cancelled = 6
 - **Planned and under IT Review = 3**



AI Usage Categories

- **Public Safety:** Improve dispatch decisions for non-emergency calls; enhance legal research capabilities; commitment to thoughtfully evaluate AI's potential to support both officers and the communities they serve.
- **Permitting:** Aimed at reducing the permitting backlog and improving the experience for both applicants and city reviewers.
- **Transportation Safety:** Video analysis tools to support Vision Zero efforts, signal timing, and operational awareness.
- **Communication Tools:** Assist with text editing, help draft communications that address bias in language, generate copy using customizable templates to ensure consistency in voice, and address challenges associated with complex and technical language in public-facing communications.
- **Chatbot Tools:** Simulates human-like conversations in natural language and may be used to handle basic customer requests and interactions.

Lessons Learned – AI Proof of Value Framework

The **AI Intake & Review Process** includes an **AI Proof of Value framework** with performance metrics to determine the return on investment (ROI) and to ensure pilots are judged on clear objectives, business value, responsible use, and long-term supportability. Objectives are evaluated using the S.M.A.R.T. criteria.

Objective	SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound)
Business Value	By the end of a pilot, 80%+ of pilot users reported that they found business value in using the solution.
Alignment with Business Goals	Confirm that the solution aligns 100% with business goals and City values.
Responsible AI	By the end of the pilot, 100% of pilot users will be educated on the City’s Responsible AI principles.
Success Criteria	Establish a benchmark and record measurable benefits of an AI-supported solution compared to the previous solution/approach.
Accuracy and Reliability	Measure against the acceptable accuracy of output, including bias and hallucination audit results.
User Experience and Feedback	By the end of the pilots, achieve an 80%+ positive rating for overall user experience.
Supportability/Scalability	By the end of the pilots, achieve a “Yes” to supportability and scalability of the piloted solution at the City of Seattle.

Lessons Learned – Examples

- **AI Permitting Prescreening Tools:** Focusing on middle housing dwellings that take up the majority of new residential construction permits, the pilot found that CivCheck's automated checks were accurate, comprehensive, and capable of reducing intake screening times by up to 46 days. 86% of SDCI pilot users reported business value from the tool.
- **Microsoft Copilot Chat:** Pilot was conducted in 2025 from Sept. to Nov. over two separate waves totaling 500 users. City employees in the pilot self-reported 83% finding business value from having access to Copilot Chat, 79% had a positive user experience, and they reported an average time savings of 2.5 hours/week per user, showing reduced load and improved responsiveness
- **C3 Pilot:** By replacing manual, siloed workflows with AI-driven insights and interactive dashboards, the application reduced collision analysis time and highlighted safety hotspots. However, while the pilot showed exciting results, productionization would require significant effort, configuration, and internal staffing.

AI Partnerships

- **Success through partnerships is one of the four strategic pillars in our City of Seattle 2025-2026 AI Plan. Partnerships are represented by:**
 - Collaborating with academia, nonprofits, and industry to pilot solutions that reflect shared values.
 - Engaging the public through educational campaigns, resident-focused tools, and community feedback.
 - Aligning with other governments to monitor policy and advocate for responsible technology legislation.
 - Partnering with our labor partners to ensure proactive engagement and clear communication.



AI Partnerships – Community

- **UW Partnership:** Completed partnership agreement with the UW that allows us to engage with researchers at UW for AI research, projects, development, technical/professional services.
- **AI House:** First-in-the-nation AI hub, focused on entrepreneurs, startups, and community leaders building the next era of AI in Seattle. Partnership between the Office of Economic Development, AI2 Incubator, and Ada Developers Academy. \$210,000 investment from OED to support programmatic needs and \$400,000 from Washington Department of Commerce for real estate. 24 teams recruited to the incubators; \$40.6 million raised; and 119 events were held with 11,153 participants.
- **Community Innovation Hackathons:** Students, entrepreneurs, technologists, City staff, and community co-created AI-powered solutions to critical City priorities.
 - September 2025: Improve awareness and access to youth enrichment programs citywide.
 - October 2025: Streamline permitting processes.
 - November 2025: Improve the customer service process or experience
- **AI Safety Awareness Community Event at Jefferson Community Center (October 2025)**



AI Partnerships – Labor

- Partnering with our labor partners to ensure engagement and communication.
- Committed to working with labor partners to invest in the professional development of our employees, protect jobs, and preserve the rights of workers while improving the essential services.
- The City’s labor partners bring a critical understanding of workflows, resident interactions, and the on-the-ground realities that shape implementation. By working together, the City ensures that AI solutions are co-designed to enhance and not disrupt, and that we realize our shared vision of equitable, people-centered, high-performing municipal service.
- Labor conversation themes centered around focusing pilots on AI opportunities that (1) relieve the burdens where employees identify them, (2) allow us to make much better decisions, and (3) enable levels of high responsiveness to staff and community that are not currently possible.



Workforce Upskilling and Education (1/2)

- Workforce upskilling is one of the four strategic pillars in the City of Seattle 2025-2026 AI Plan.
- Continuous training and education will be engrained in our AI journey.
- To support our employees, the City is dedicating ongoing time and resources to encourage continual training and educating staff members.



Workforce Upskilling and Education (2/2)

Training Workstream	Q2 Status
Launching a comprehensive Citywide AI training program.	Completed and ongoing.
Reskilling staff to navigate ethical AI use and prepare for shifts in roles and responsibilities.	Ongoing, plan in place for 2026.
Establishing continuous education, cultural change management, and collaboration with unions to support workforce transitions.	In progress.
Training and Community of Practice for Approved/Deployed Enterprise AI Tools.	Ongoing, plan in place for 2026.



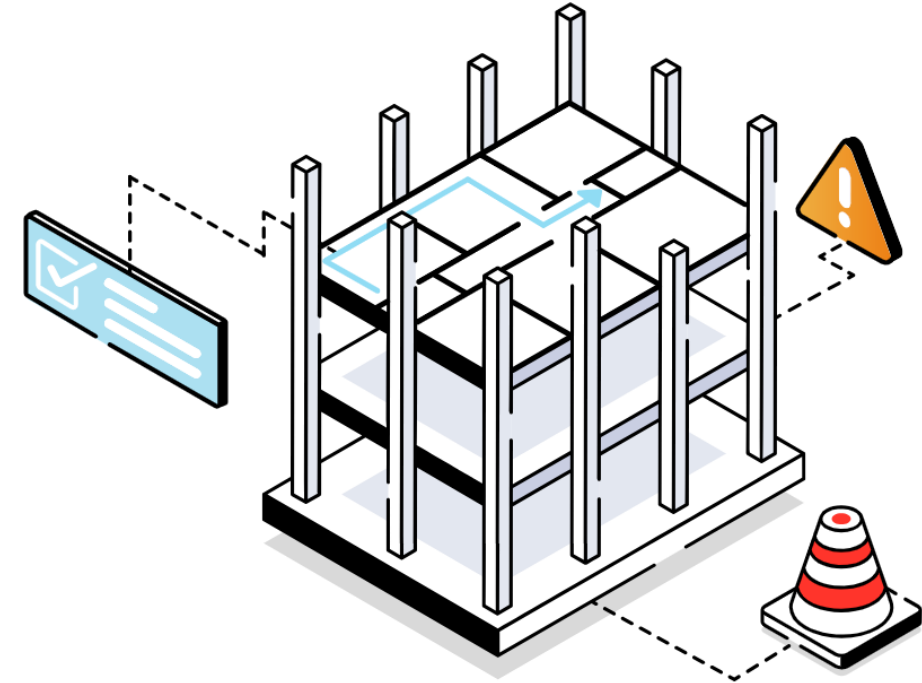
Financial Strategy

- Seattle IT set a strategy in 2024 to not make major AI investments until 2025-2026, as the vendor space and pricing were too early and dynamic.
- Seattle IT and departments have obtained a significant amount of the major pilots on grants and Proof of Concept projects, so as to minimize City investments until clear value is demonstrated.
- Investments that the City has made have been small in cost. Some existing systems have rolled out AI features and components that are incorporated into the subscription and licensing fees.
- Seattle IT is tracking one-time and ongoing financial costs closely, including operations and maintenance fees, cloud storage fees, license fees, and potential AI token pricing.



Financial Costs – AI Initiatives in 2026 Budget

- AI Innovation Fund (\$400,000): One-time dollars for use on innovative pilot projects that deliver measurable community and staff benefits.
- \$750,000 was appropriated in the 2026 Construction and Inspections Fund for the purchase and on-going subscription for an AI permitting tool.
- \$750,000 of General Fund was budgeted in the Seattle IT budget to support the work associated with permitting process improvements.



Financial Costs – Approved Software & Pilots

- **Approved Software (recent annual expenses)**
 - Ranges from \$199 to \$289,517.
 - Types of expenses:
 - Billed on a per user license basis;
 - Billed on the number of records processed;
 - Several existing tools have incorporated new AI functionality into the overall software and does not specifically have an expense line item for the new AI function; and
 - Some with no additional cost to existing licenses.
- **AI Pilots and Proofs of Concept (initial known costs)**
 - 13 of the 23 pilots did not have an associated cost.
 - Ranges from \$2,500 to \$60,000.

Feedback and Questions

