Seatle City Council Select Budget Committee

Councilmember Budget Proposals| Wednesday, October 28, 2026

Seattle Fire Department (SFD)

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2027-2028 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-001-A

Increase SFD by $7.1 million GF (2027) and $7.1 million GF (2028) to fund overtime costs at current target staffing level

SPONSORS

Dan Strauss, Joy Hollingsworth, Robert Kettle

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fund	2027 Increase (Decrease)	2028 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(7,100,000)	$(7,100,000)
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(7,100,000)	$(7,100,000)

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase proposed appropriations to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $7.1 million GF in 2027 and $7.1 million GF in 2028 to restore a proposed reduction to SFD's overtime budget.

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget reduced SFD's overtime budget by $7.1 million. To sustain this reduction, the Executive would reduce SFD's target daily staffing level, across all SFD fire stations, from 222 to 209. This operational change would require systematic reliance on "unit outages," or the removal from use of one or more SFD response apparatus. Currently, SFD manages unit outages on an ad hoc basis responsive to the number of SFD uniformed staff who volunteer for overtime shifts on a given day. In 2025 there were 1094 unit outages, and the proposed reduction would require 2027 unit outages approximately 50 percent above that level.

This CBA would restore the proposed reduction and provide funding for SFD to meet its current target daily staffing level of 222.

ATTACHMENT: No

TRANSACTIONS - ONGOING

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2027		$7,100,000
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2028		$7,100,000

2027-2028 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-001-B

Increase SFD by $7.1 million GF (2027) and $7.1 million GF (2028) to fund overtime costs at current target staffing level

SPONSORS

Maritza Rivera, Rob Saka, Robert Kettle

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fund	2027 Increase (Decrease)	2028 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(7,100,000)	$(7,100,000)
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(7,100,000)	$(7,100,000)

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase proposed appropriations to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $7.1 million GF in 2027 and $7.1 million GF in 2028 to restore a proposed reduction to SFD's overtime budget.

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget reduced SFD's overtime budget by $7.1 million. To sustain this reduction, the Executive would reduce SFD's target daily staffing level, across all SFD fire stations, from 222 to 209. This operational change would require systematic reliance on "unit outages," or the removal from use of one or more SFD response apparatus. Currently, SFD manages unit outages on an ad hoc basis responsive to the number of SFD uniformed staff who volunteer for overtime shifts on a given day. In 2025 there were 1094 unit outages, and the proposed reduction would require 2027 unit outages approximately 50 percent above that level.

This CBA would restore the proposed reduction and provide funding for SFD to meet its current target daily staffing level of 222.

ATTACHMENT: No

TRANSACTIONS - ONGOING

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2027		$7,100,000
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2028		$7,100,000

2027-2028 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-002-A

Increase SFD by $5.1 million GF (2027) and $5.1 million GF (2028) to fund estimated overtime costs based on data analysis

SPONSORS

Dionne Foster, Eddie Lin, Alexis Mercedes Rinck

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fund	2027 Increase (Decrease)	2028 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(5,100,000)	$(5,100,000)
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(5,100,000)	$(5,100,000)

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase proposed appropriations to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $5.1 million GF in 2027 and $5.1 million GF in 2028 partially to restore a proposed reduction to SFD's overtime budget. This proposed increase is based on analysis conducted by SFD, as described below.

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget reduced SFD's overtime budget by $7.1 million. To sustain this reduction, the Executive would reduce SFD's target daily staffing level, across all SFD fire stations, from 222 to 209. This operational change would require systematic reliance on "unit outages," or the removal from use of one or more SFD response apparatus.

Currently, SFD manages unit outages on an ad hoc basis responsive to the number of SFD uniformed staff who volunteer for overtime shifts on a given day. In 2025 there were 1094 unit outages, which allowed SFD to avoid approximately $4.8 million in overtime costs. The $7.1 million overtime reduction in the 2027-2028 Proposed Budget would result in approximately 1600 to 1700 unit outages.

To scope this CBA's proposed partial restoration of SFD overtime funding, SFD aligned that 2025 baseline to an anticipated higher number of firefighters at SFD in 2027 than 2025. SFD's base budget includes funding to train 60 new fire recruits per year, and in 2026 both the Executive and the Council added funding for 20 additional recruits, for a total of 100. Even balancing these new recruits with the department's expectations for firefighter separations from service (e.g., retirements), SFD believes that the higher staffing level in 2027 will mean that more firefighters will volunteer for overtime shifts than was the case in 2025. However, SFD's analysis suggested that even with this higher staffing level in 2027 some level of unit outages will persist.

SFD calculated overtime cost savings from the estimated 2027 unit-outage level at $2 million to $2.5 million. This CBA reflects the sponsor's interest in taking a cautious approach to reducing SFD's budget consistent with anticipated cost savings. Therefore, it proposes that of the $7.1 million proposed for reduction by the Executive, $5.1 million is restored to SFD's overtime budget. This CBA would not

2027-2028 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

reduce SFD's target daily staffing level in 2027.

The proposed reduction involves complex analysis performed on a time-limited basis and predictions about future firefighter behavior based on past firefighter behavior. A future version of this CBA may include a revised figure if SFD is able to refine its initial analytical process. SFD has not previously performed this type of analysis, and it is possible that SFD will require additional appropriations in 2027 to right-size its overtime budget.

ATTACHMENT: No

TRANSACTIONS - ONGOING

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2027		$5,100,000
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2028		$5,100,000

2027-2028 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

V1

SFD-003-A

Increase SFD by $60,000 GF (2027) for a feasibility study for a new fire station on South Lake Union

SPONSORS

Robert Kettle, Rob Saka, Dan Strauss

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fund	2027 Increase (Decrease)	2028 Increase (Decrease)
General Fund	$(60,000)	$0
Total Budget Balance Effect	$(60,000)	$0

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Council Budget Action (CBA) would increase proposed appropriations to the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) by $60,000 GF in 2027 (one-time) for a consultant-led feasibility study for a new marine- and land-based fire station on South Lake Union. Between 2010 and 2025, South Lake Union's population increased by approximately 285%. It has a population density of over 19,000 people per square mile, more than twice as dense as the average across Seattle, and zoning allows for the construction of towers up to 440 feet tall.

There is no fire station located in the South Lake Union urban center. The closest stations to this urban center are Fire Station 2, at 2320 4th Avenue in Belltown, and Fire Station 8, at 110 Lee Street in Queen Anne. Fire Station 22, the third closet station, is substantially north at 901 E. Roanoke Street.

According to the Seattle Department of Transportation, many of the city's serious and fatal crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists are concentrated downtown and in South Lake Union. SFD firefighter/paramedics are first responders to the scenes of such crashes. Additionally, SFD currently has limited ability to respond to marine emergencies on Lake Union. The department's marine units are stationed downtown, requiring firefighters to drive to Fisherman's Terminal to access a fireboat and then to travel to Lake Union at a no-wake speed of seven knots (8.1 miles per hour).

This CBA would allocate funding for the preliminary assessment of the feasibility – from both an infrastructure and operational perspective – and cost of siting, constructing, and resourcing a new marine- and land-based fire station on South Lake Union. Resources have not been identified to fund these costs. In addition to capital costs, such a new facility would require at least $14.4 million in one-time costs (apparatus and training; this figure is exclusive of costs for furniture, fixtures, and equipment) and $11.7 million in ongoing costs (position costs for the 67 new firefighters who would staff the new station). SFD would relocate one of its fireboats to the new station.

ATTACHMENT: No

2027-2028 COUNCIL BUDGET ACTION

TRANSACTIONS - ONE-TIME

Dept	BSL	BCL	Year	Revenue	Expenditure
SFD	Operations	00100-BO-FD-F3000	2027		$60,000

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

2027 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT

V1

SFD-004S-A

Request that the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) report on its firefighter recruitment, hiring, and training practices, including local and regional comparisons

SPONSORS

Rob Saka, Joy Hollingsworth, Robert Kettle

CENTRAL STAFF SUMMARY

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) would request that the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), in collaboration with the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC), conduct a comprehensive review of its firefighter recruitment, hiring, and training practices and compare them to those of other fire departments in the local and regional labor markets. Responsive to recommendations in the City's 2028 Workforce Equity Accountability Report, SFD has made changes to various aspects of its recruiting process. These include the implementation of rolling testing dates in multiple locations, conducted by a third-party vendor; adjustments to the weighting of test results; and the requirement of bias testing for panelists who interview firefighter candidates.

It is the intent of the sponsor to identify (1) whether SFD's current processes support the timely hiring and training of qualified firefighter candidates and (2) whether changes to current practices could improve SFD's competitiveness in these labor markets while maintaining its established professional standards.

The review, in the form of a report, should contain the following elements:

• A comparison of SFD's recruitment, hiring, and training practices (including timelines, requirements, and procedures) with those of other local and regional fire departments;

• Relevant data, from recent recruitment, hiring, and training processes, that includes but is not limited to application volumes, candidate ZIP codes, candidate demographics where available, speed of progression through hiring stages, candidate attrition, and the number of conditional offers made to candidates who are (a) Seattle or (b) King County residents;

• Data concerning candidates who were recruited, trained, hired as firefighter recruits, and who separated from SFD prior to completing their probationary period. This analysis should include the stage and reason for separation, to the extent that it is documentably known by SFD;

• A description of any available data or information regarding SFD candidate decisions to pursue employment with other departments, including factors for these decisions, to the extent that they are documentably known by SFD, such as hiring and training timelines, compensation, communication to the candidate by the other department, or the other department's onboarding processes;

• Information about the training that is provided to operations company supervisors regarding the

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

2027 STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT

evaluation and assessment of probationary employees, comprising both descriptions of each such type of training and the number of hours of training that is provided;

• Identification of internal steps or procedures that may contribute to recruitment, hiring, and training delays or candidate attrition at SFD, including but not limited to the constraints posed by exam scheduling, background checks, medical evaluations, and coordination with the Public Safety Civil Service Commission; and

• Recommendations for procedural, administrative, or structural changes that could improve SFD's efficiency or competitiveness in these labor markets while maintaining its established professional standards.

The report should be provided to the Public Safety Committee by July 1, 2027.

Responsible Council Committee(s): Public Safety

DUE DATE: July 1, 2027