Office of Planning and Community Development

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Department Overview

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) was established in December 2015 with a mission of strengthening citywide planning and implementation and ensuring City departments are aligned and coordinated in planning for Seattle's future development. OPCD coordinates City departments to ensure that development decisions and investments advance equitable growth, consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. The department is guided by its vision of "an inspiring city, in harmony with nature, where everyone thrives." In addition to partnering with other City departments, OPCD works closely with community partners and other agencies to implement that vision. During the last five years, OPCD has accomplished a wide range of projects, including annual amendments and a major update to the City's Comprehensive Plan; implementation of legislation to help activate downtown such as conversion of office buildings to housing and flexibility for downtown street level uses; industrial and maritime strategy planning; funding more than 91 community-initiated projects to combat displacement and increased access to opportunity through the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI); and numerous other items.

OPCD's organizational model includes four planning and community development divisions: Equitable Development, Long Range Planning, Community Planning, and Land Use Policy & Strategic Initiatives. OPCD also has an Indigenous Planner that works across divisions and houses two independent commissions: the Seattle Design Commission and the Seattle Planning Commission. OPCD also staffs the Equitable Development Initiative's Advisory Board.

Budget Snapshot

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	12,523,669	12,414,773	7,911,353	8,028,493
Other Funding - Operating	15,646,237	30,747,282	30,527,960	30,559,992
Total Operations	**28,169,907**	**43,162,056**	**38,439,313**	**38,588,485**
Total Appropriations	**28,169,907**	**43,162,056**	**38,439,313**	**38,588,485**
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	50.50	50.50	49.00	49.00

** FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here*

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Budget Overview

The City's 2027-2028 Proposed Budget maintains core services for OPCD. The department will continue to invest in programs such as regional and community planning, station area planning, and the Equitable Development Initiative.

The General Fund revenue forecast for the City's budget is insufficient to cover all anticipated citywide costs. OPCD's proposed budget preserves critical City services and helps mitigate the City's General Fund shortfall.

The Equitable Development Initiative

The Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) continues to be an important program within OPCD, serving as a key inclusive growth strategy for communities in Seattle most at risk of physical and cultural displacement. The EDI program is coordinated and led by OPCD and guided by an implementation plan and financial investment strategy developed in collaboration with community members and staff from the Office of Housing (OH), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Office of Economic Development (OED), Office of Arts and Culture (ARTS), Mayor's Office (MO), and City Budget Office (CBO). It is also informed by an external advisory board representing impacted communities.

Since the program launch in 2017, it has grown to encompass more than 91 projects. Support for these projects includes a mix of capacity building and capital development funding, which can include resources for site acquisition. The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget includes $26.8 million of ongoing funding each year for EDI grants ($22 million JumpStart tax and $4.8 million STRT). OPCD's Planning and Community Development budget includes an additional $2.3 million for EDI staffing and administrative costs ($2 million STRT and $340,000 JumpStart tax). Ongoing funding of EDI through the JumpStart tax and STRT means that City investments in these community-driven projects and land acquisitions will provide a lasting legacy for Seattle and its community members.

Planning & Community Development

In OPCD planning and community development includes long range planning, community planning, and land use policy and strategic initiatives. OPCD's Long Range Planning Division manages and develops long range and citywide policy, engages in state and regional policy processes, and provides data and analysis in support of OPCD projects, City departments, and City leadership. The division has the primary responsibility for the City's Comprehensive Plan and ensuring compliance with state and regional planning requirements. OPCD's Community Planning Division convenes interdepartmental and community stakeholders to come together to shape place-based planning across the city—helping to ensure the development of livable, healthy communities as Seattle grows and changes. This work includes developing Regional Center Plans, Community Action Plans for new and expanded light rail station areas, and leading planning and engagement efforts like Reconnect South Park and the North Aurora Initiative. OPCD's Land Use Policy and Strategic Initiatives Division works to advance and implement the City's planning and community development priorities through Land Use Code amendments and the implementation of development requirements and incentive programs. The total proposed budget for planning and community development in OPCD is $10.6 million in 2027 and $10.8 million in 2028. Of this funding, 98% is for OPCD staff and overhead costs. The proposed budget removes 1.5 vacant positions and maintains critical planning and community development services.

2027 & 2028 Proposed Budget Changes

Changes to OPCD's budget prioritize maintaining current service levels, adjusting administrative cost allocations, and removing vacant positions to achieve savings. These adjustments protect core public services and optimize financial effectiveness.

Incremental Budget Changes

Office of Planning and Community Development

	Dollars	FTE
2026 Adopted Budget	**43,162,055**	**50.50**
Baseline		
Remove One-time Items	(3,800,000)	-
Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate	(120,273)	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(196,409)	-
Proposed Operating		
Remove Sunsetting, Vacant Community Development Specialist Position	(187,737)	(1.00)
Shift Overhead and Administrative Costs to EDI Jumpstart Tax	(338,403)	-
Remove Vacant Office Support Position	(75,920)	(0.50)
Extend Sunset Date from Regional Centers Planner Position	-	-
Eliminate Printing Budget for the Planning Commission	(4,000)	-
Update Hourly Fee for Oversight of the Major Institutions and Schools Program	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	**$(4,722,742)**	**(1.50)**
Total 2027 Proposed Budget	**$38,439,313**	**49.00**

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Remove One-time Items

Expenditures $(3,800,000)

This item removes one-time items that were added in the 2026 Adopted Budget. They include $3,100,000 of one-time General Fund for EDI grantees, $500,000 of one-time General Fund for planning and activation for OPCD's North Aurora planning work, and $200,000 of one-time Jumpstart tax for planning activities related to housing reparations.

Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate

Expenditures $(120,273)

The City’s employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings. Based on the updated actuarial valuation for 2026, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.06% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 13.48% for 2027 and 13.52% for 2028.

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Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures	$(196,409)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare and other central cost factors. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Proposed Operating

Remove Sunsetting, Vacant Community Development Specialist Position

Expenditures	$(187,737)
Position Allocation	(1.00)

This item removes General Fund budget and 1 FTE for a Senior Community Development Specialist position in OPCD supporting the Land Use and Strategic Initiatives Division. The position has been vacant for most of 2026 and was scheduled to sunset in January 2028. The position was created to support the Downtown Activation Plan. The reduction will be offset by shifting the workload within the Land Use Policy and Strategic Initiatives division.

Shift Overhead and Administrative Costs to EDI Jumpstart Tax

Expenditures	$(338,403)

This item reduces OPCD's General Fund budget for overhead and administrative costs and shifts the costs to EDI Jumpstart tax funds. This shift equates to a 1% reduction in EDI grant funding and distributes OPCD's overhead and administrative costs more evenly across the funds supporting OPCD's work.

Remove Vacant Office Support Position

Expenditures	$(75,920)
Position Allocation	(0.50)

This item removes General Fund budget and 0.5 FTE for an Administrative Specialist 2 position that previously functioned as OPCD's reception and office support position. The position is vacant. The reduction will be managed by changing OPCD's phone number to a pre-recorded message and shifting other office support tasks within OCPD.

Extend Sunset Date from Regional Centers Planner Position

This item extends the sunset date associated with an existing Regional Centers planner position from January 2028 to September 2028. The position is a full-time role funded by Payroll Expense Tax revenues. It was created in the 2023 Adopted Budget with a sunset date attached. The sunset date was then extended in the 2025 Adopted Budget to January 2028. The initial body of work associated with the position includes the development of seven Regional Center plans; however, the last of those plans are not expected to be adopted by City Council until after this position sunsets in 2028.

Eliminate Printing Budget for the Planning Commission

Expenditures	$(4,000)

This item eliminates General Fund for Seattle Planning Commission's (SPC) printing and copying budget. These funds are not needed, and the reduction will not affect service levels.

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Update Hourly Fee for Oversight of the Major Institutions and Schools Program

This item updates the fee OPCD charges to major institutions (i.e., hospitals and universities) for OPCD staff support of the Major Institution Citizen Advisory Committees from $139/hour to $181/hour. The fee changes are reflected in the Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections' fee legislation included with proposed budget.

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
OPCD - BO-PC-X2P00 - Planning and Community Development				
00100 - General Fund	8,743,901	9,112,279	7,708,956	7,824,141
12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	1,082,583	1,990,178	1,978,838	1,991,130
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	1,196,741	593,586	932,156	939,431
Total for BSL: BO-PC-X2P00	**11,023,225**	**11,696,043**	**10,619,949**	**10,754,702**
OPCD - BO-PC-X2P10 - Design Commission				
00100 - General Fund	300	202,495	202,397	204,351
30010 - REET I Capital Fund	691,640	798,440	790,292	802,757
Total for BSL: BO-PC-X2P10	**691,940**	**1,000,935**	**992,689**	**1,007,108**
OPCD - BO-PC-X2P40 - Equitable Development Initiative				
00100 - General Fund	3,779,468	3,100,000	-	-
12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	2,055,636	4,776,232	4,776,232	4,776,232
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	10,619,637	22,588,846	22,050,443	22,050,443
Total for BSL: BO-PC-X2P40	**16,454,741**	**30,465,078**	**26,826,675**	**26,826,675**
Department Total	**28,169,907**	**43,162,056**	**38,439,313**	**38,588,485**
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	**50.50**	**50.50**	**49.00**	**49.00**

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of Planning and Community Development

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	12,523,669	12,414,773	7,911,353	8,028,493
12200 - Short-Term Rental Tax Fund	3,138,219	6,766,410	6,755,069	6,767,361
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	11,816,378	23,182,432	22,982,599	22,989,874
30010 - REET I Capital Fund	691,640	798,440	790,292	802,757
Budget Totals for OPCD	**28,169,907**	**43,162,056**	**38,439,313**	**38,588,485**

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Revenue Overview

2027 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
333110	Ind Fed Grants	410,902	-	-	-
334010	State Grants	265,006	-	-	-
360900	Miscellaneous Revs-Other Rev	1	64,000	64,000	64,000
397010	Operating Transfers In	-	167,495	167,495	167,495
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		**675,909**	**231,495**	**231,495**	**231,495**
Total OPCD Resources		**675,909**	**231,495**	**231,495**	**231,495**

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Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OPCD - BO-PC-X2P00 - Planning and Community Development

The purpose of the Planning and Community Development Budget Summary Level is to manage a collaborative vision for planning that advances equitable development and creates great places in the City of Seattle that is consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, and to inform and guide growth related decisions for future development.

Program Expenditures	**2025 Actuals**	**2026 Adopted**	**2027 Proposed**	**2028 Proposed**
Planning	10,363,763	10,889,373	9,824,888	9,951,650
Planning Commission Management	659,462	806,670	795,061	803,052
Total	**11,023,225**	**11,696,043**	**10,619,949**	**10,754,702**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	47.50	46.50	45.00	45.00

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The following information summarizes the programs in Planning and Community Development Budget Summary Level:

Planning

The purpose of the Planning Program is to manage a coordinated vision for growth and development in the City of Seattle that is consistent with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, and to inform and guide growth related decisions for future development.

Expenditures/FTE	**2025 Actuals**	**2026 Adopted**	**2027 Proposed**	**2028 Proposed**
Planning	10,363,763	10,889,373	9,824,888	9,951,650
Full Time Equivalents Total	44.50	43.50	42.00	42.00

Planning Commission Management

The purpose of the Planning Commission is to advise the Mayor, the City Council and City departments on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of the city. The commission also provides independent analysis and promotes issues vital to livability.

Expenditures/FTE	**2025 Actuals**	**2026 Adopted**	**2027 Proposed**	**2028 Proposed**
Planning Commission Management	659,462	806,670	795,061	803,052
Full Time Equivalents Total	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

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OPCD - BO-PC-X2P10 - Design Commission

The purpose of the Design Commission Budget Summary Level is to give advice to the Mayor, City Council, and City Departments, concerning City-funded Capital Improvement Projects, projects that seek long-term use of the right-of-way, or major transportation projects.

Program Expenditures	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Design Commission	691,940	1,000,935	992,689	1,007,108
Total	**691,940**	**1,000,935**	**992,689**	**1,007,108**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

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OPCD - BO-PC-X2P40 - Equitable Development Initiative

The purpose of the Equitable Development Initiative Budget Summary Level is to foster community leadership and support organizations that promote equitable access to housing, jobs, education, parks, cultural expression, healthy food, and other community needs and amenities. The goal of the Equitable Development Initiative is to address displacement and the unequal distribution of opportunities in order to sustain a diverse Seattle.

Program Expenditures	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Equitable Development Initiative	16,454,741	30,465,078	26,826,675	26,826,675
Total	**16,454,741**	**30,465,078**	**26,826,675**	**26,826,675**

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