Seattle Center

2027-28 Proposed Budget Overview

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Seattle City Council Select Budget Committee

City of Seattle

Seattle Center – At A Glance

Our Mission: *We create exceptional events, experiences, and environments that delight and inspire the human spirit to build stronger communities.*

- **74-acre campus, 40-acre green space**. We are both a regional destination for events and a green space for growing neighborhoods – Uptown, Belltown, South Lake Union, Queen Anne.
- **Waterfront Park, 20-acre space**. We are a regional destination spanning Belltown to Pioneer Square, blending parkland, events, recreation, public art, and community spaces. Nearly 9 million annual visits in 2025 – may reach 15 million in 2026.
- **Nearly 12 million annual visitors** – largest attendance for any destination in WA.
- **An economic engine for the arts** – nearly $3.3 billion in total economic output, supported 19,400 jobs, and produced nearly $1.1 billion in labor income across King County. Campus activity also generated more than $37 million in local tax revenue annually.
- **Home to 35 independent organizations**– arts, culture sports and entertainment come together to form one community.
- **Largely self-funded** – we generate revenue to cover 70% of our expenses.
- **230+ full-time staff** and hundreds of part-time event staff in all aspects of campus and waterfront operations.

Seattle Center Priorities

Build On Recent Successes



Expand Into Partnerships



Shape Seattle Center's Future



Summary

- The 2027 Proposed Budget – two major changes:
  - **Seattle Center Campus Revitalization Program**: substantial reinvestment in campus infrastructure via a bond measure to be proposed in 2027
  - **Elliott Bay Connections**: expansion of operations to additional areas downtown adjoining Puget Sound as part of Waterfront Park operations
- Other important changes:
  - Interfund loan support
  - Waterfront Park staffing
  - General Fund reductions (intermittent and temp staffing, McCaw Hall programming)

TOTAL BUDGET ($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
General Fund	$17,583	$18,136	$18,655
Other Funds	$41,469	$43,520	$42,903
FTE	259.93	265.43	265.43

Reductions

1. General Fund Reductions – Temporary and Intermittent Staffing

- Reduction to the amount of temporary and intermittent staff that support operations on campus, events and programming.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed)	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	$2,335	($233)	-10%	($233)	-10%
Other Funds	--	--	--	--	--
FTE	--	--	--	--	--

Reductions

2. General Fund Reductions – McCaw Hall's Prelude Program

- This reduces the number of nights Prelude dinner service program is open and reduces budget for related contracted and external services.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed)	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	$857	($86)	-10%	($86)	-10%
Other Funds	--	--	--	--	--
FTE	--	--	--	--	--

Continued Arts and Cultural Related Investments

3. Northwest Folklife – Fund Shift from General Fund to Admissions Tax - $400,797

- This item preserves funding for Northwest Folklife Festival by shifting it from being supported by the General Fund to being funded by Admissions Tax revenue-backed appropriations.

4. Winterfest – Ongoing Funding from Admissions Tax - $222,122

- Admission Tax support was one-time in 2026. This item provides ongoing support for Winterfest by adding Seattle Center Fund appropriations supported by Admissions Tax revenue.







Significant Additions

1. Add Budget for Seattle Center Campus Revitalization Program

- This item adds budget in preparation for the Unlimited Tax General Obligation (UTGO) bond that is planned to be put before voters in 2027, which will support critical infrastructure updates on Seattle Center's campus, including planning and design work for four projects.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed)	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	--	--	--	--	--
Other Funds	$0	$2,350	N/A	--	N/A
FTE	--	--	--	--	--

Significant Additions

2. Add Staff to support Bond Development Work

- This item adds staff to support Bond development work, in preparation for the Unlimited Tax General Obligation (UTGO) bond that is planned to be put before voters in 2027.
- The staff additions include a Finance Analyst, Senior Safety & Health Specialist, Management Systems Analyst and Policy Lead. All positions except Policy Lead are temporary.
- This also includes ongoing position authority for the Senior Capital Projects Coordinator, which was added in the 2026 Mid-Year Budget Supplemental; this position will provide support in preparation for the capital bond proposal and subsequent project management should the bond measure be enacted.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed)	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	--	--	--	--	--
Other Funds	$0	$797	N/A	--	N/A
FTE	--	2.0	--	2.0	--

Significant Additions

3. Waterfront Term Limited Positions

- This item adds one-time Seattle Park District Fund budget over the biennium for temporary skilled maintenance staff, including an Assistant Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, Carpenter, Electrician, and Plumber.
- The addition of these staff will help maintain and repair Waterfront Park assets.
- Funds are available from prior year Park District fund balance allocated specifically for Waterfront Operations.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed)	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	--	--	--	--	--
Park District	$0	$743	N/A	$685	N/A
FTE	--	--	--	--	--

Significant Additions

4. Elliott Bay Connections Staffing Additions

- This item adds donation-backed positions to support operations and maintenance at Elliott Bay Connections (EBC), including a Maintenance Crew Chief, Senior Gardener and Installation Maintenance Worker, and 0.5 FTE, term-limited Human Resources Specialist.
- Seattle Center and the principal donors are working on an agreement for Seattle Center to take over the ongoing management and operations of the revitalized space beginning Q2 2027.
- This area includes Myrtle Edwards Park and a new greenway along Alaskan Way between Pier 62 and Pier 70.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed)	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	--	--	--	--	--
Other Funds	$0	$624	N/A	$565	N/A
FTE	--	3.5	--	3.5	--

Significant Additions

5. General Fund Support for Interfund Loan Interest Payments

- The City is providing Seattle Center with $2 million in 2027 and $1 million in 2028 of General Fund to help the department meet its COVID-19-related interfund loan payment obligations.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change (Adopted to 2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed	% Change (2027 Proposed to 2028 Proposed)
General Fund	$0	$2,000	N/A	$1,000	N/A
Other Funds	--	--		--	--
FTE	--	--		--	--

Significant Additions

6. General Fund Support for Public Safety Investments (2026 Year-End Supplemental)

- This item adds up to $500,000 in one-time funding to support campus safety and security through training, equipment and operational support for the Emergency Services Unit.

($000s)	2026 Adopted	2026 Proposed Year-End Supplemental	% Change (Adopted to 2026 Revised Proposal)	2027/2028 Proposed	% Change (2026 Adopted to 2027 Proposed)
General Fund	$0	$500,000	N/A	$0	N/A
Other Funds	--	--		--	--
FTE	--	--		--	--

Position Changes

Bond Development (5 positions): critical positions for pre-bond work

- Policy Lead (Strategic Advisor 3); Temporary Finance Analyst; Temporary Senior Safety & Health Specialist; Temporary Management Systems Analyst; Senior Capital Projects Coordinator (ongoing position authority for a position that was added in 2026)

Waterfront Park (4 positions): term-limited skilled staff to address asset maintenance and repair

- Assistant Facilities Maintenance Supervisor; Carpenter; Electrician; Plumber

Elliott Bay Connections (3.5 FTE): initial staff support for new operations and maintenance responsibility

- Maintenance Crew Chief; Senior Gardener; Installation Maintenance Worker; Human Resources Specialist (0.50 FTE, term-limited)