SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

2027–2028 Proposed Budget
Policy Considerations

Select Budget Committee | October 15, 2026

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SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Budget Summary

	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change	2028 Proposed	% Change
Operating Appropriations by BSL					
Chief of Police	$19.1M	$18.3M	(4.1%)	$18.5M	$1.0%
Collaborative Policing	$15.6M	$17.0M	8.8%	$17.1M	1.1%
Compliance & Professional Standards	$6.1M	$6.8M	11.5%	$6.8M	0.6%
Criminal Investigations	$53.6M	$62.5M	16.6%	$63.3M	1.3%
East Precinct	$23.3M	$30.7M	31.5%	$31.2M	1.8%
Leadership & Administration	$125.2M	$133.2M	6.4%	$137.1M	2.9%
North Precinct	$34.0M	$45.3M	33.2%	$46.1M	1.7%
Office of Police Accountability	$6.8M	$6.9M	1.4%	$7.0M	1.0%
Patrol Operations	$24.3M	$25.7M	5.9%	$26.0M	0.9%
School Zone Camera Program	$4.6M	$6.8M	49.8%	$8.1M	18.7%
South Precinct	$23.6M	$31.5M	33.2%	$32.0M	1.6%
Southwest Precinct	$17.9M	$23.7M	32.6%	$24.1M	1.6%
Special Operations	$73.0M	$77.0M	5.6%	$78.0M	1.3%
Technical Services	$34.2M	$34.5M	1.0%	$35.7M	3.4%
West Precinct	$27.4M	$36.6M	33.8%	$37.2M	1.5%
Operating Subtotal	$488.6M	$556.6M	13.9%	$568.2M	2.1%

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CENTRAL STAFF

Budget Summary

	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	% Change	2028 Proposed	% Change
Appropriation Totals (Operating + Capital)					
Total Appropriations	$488.6M	$556.6M	13.1%	$568.2M	2.1%
Total FTE	1,879	1,855	(1.3%)	1,855	0.0%
Revenues					
General Fund	$483.3M	$549.7M	13.7%	$560.1M	1.9%
Other Source(s)	$5.3M	$6.8M	28.5%	$8.1M	18.7%
Total Revenues	**$488.6M**	**$556.5M**	**13.9%**	**$568.2M**	**2.1%**

Policy Consideration

1. 2027-2028 Proposed Sworn Staffing Plan

The sworn staffing plan would slow hiring in 2027 and stop sworn growth altogether in 2028.

Year	New Hires	Separations	Net Adds	Funded FTE
2019	108	(92)	16	1,467
2020	51	(186)	(135)	1,497
2021	81	(171)	(90)	1,343
2022	58	(159)	(101)	1,200
2023	61	(97)	(36)	1,113
2024	84	(83)	1	1,074
2025	165	(70)	95	1,041
2026 (projected)	145	(92)	53	1,184
2027 (planned)	128	(85)	43	1,250
2028 (planned)	79	(79)	0	1,250

Policy Consideration

1. 2027-2028 Proposed Sworn Staffing Plan

To stay within 1,250 Funded FTE in 2028, SPD would have to slow recruit hiring in late 2027 from about 12 per month to about seven per month, and lateral hiring would fall from roughly two per month to about four per year.

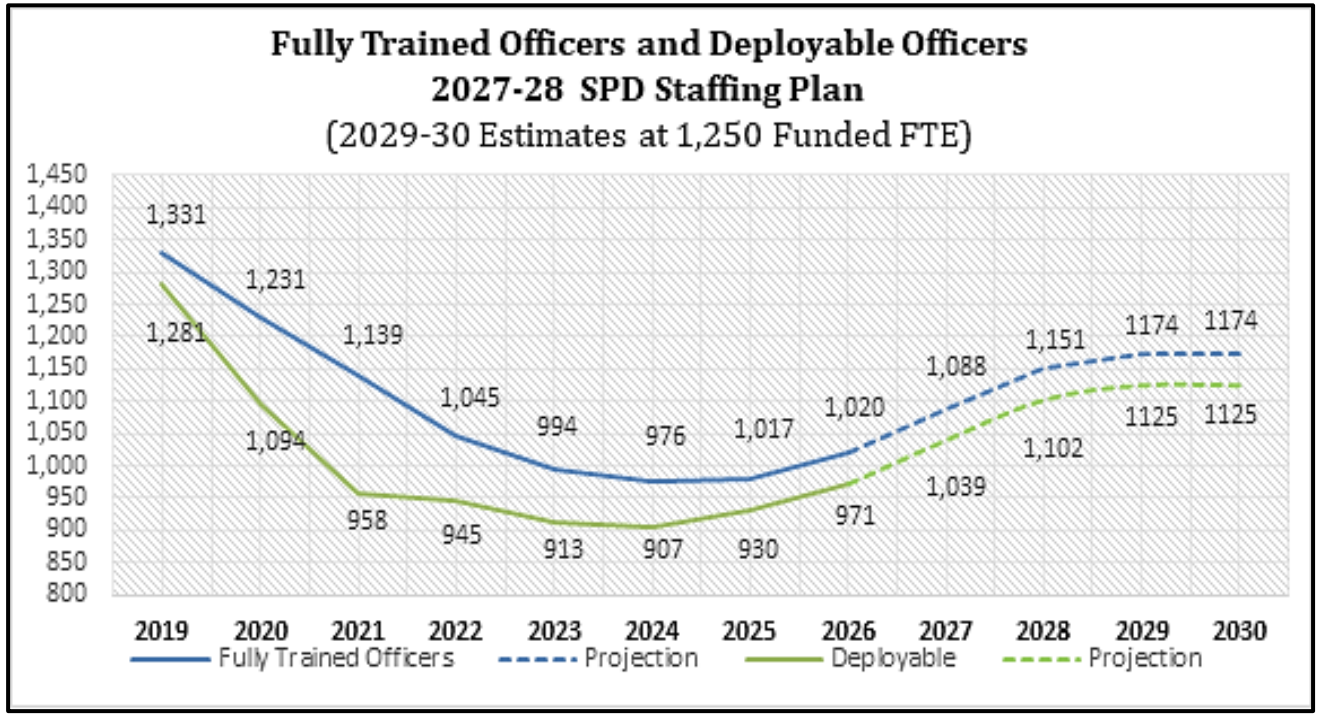


Funded FTE is not a count of sworn officers; it reflects the total funding needed to support recruits, student officers, and fully trained officers. Because recruits have not yet taken the sworn oath, funded FTE will never match the number of sworn officers. Recently, SPD has had an average of over 60 recruits in the academy each month.

Policy Consideration

1. 2027-2028 Proposed Sworn Staffing Plan

A historically large share of funded FTE now supports recruits and student officers. Those individuals will move into fully trained positions over the next two years, causing the number of deployable sworn officers to steadily increase until 2029. Without funding for additional net new hires – sworn staff will eventually plateau at 1,174 fully trained officers and 1,125 deployable officers.



The sworn staffing plan is calibrated to fund an ongoing 1,250 funded FTE in each year of the biennium. However, SPD will not require that level of funding until 2028.

In 2027, the department needs funding for 1,229 FTE (not 1,250 FTE) to support its current staffing plan, leaving roughly $4.5 million more in sworn staffing funds than required.

Policy Consideration

1. 2027-2028 Proposed Sworn Staffing Plan

Options:

A. Size SPD sworn salary funding to the 2027-2028 SPD sworn staffing plan.

- $2.0 million is available in 2027. No reduction is available in 2028.

B. Maintain current recruit hiring (an annual average of 12 per month) through 2028.

- $792,000 would add 23 net new officers in 2027
- $11.6 million would add another 69 net new officers, and equipment in 2028
- This option creates ongoing costs of approximately $22.0 million in 2029 to pay for the 92 net new hires.

C. Maintain current recruit hiring (annual average of 12 per month) and lateral hiring (2 per month) through 2028.

- $2.1 million would add 38 net new officers in 2027
- $17.0 million would add another 87 net new officers, and equipment in 2028
- This option creates ongoing costs of $29.1 million in 2029 to pay for 125 net new hires.

D. Option A plus either Option B or Option C.

E. No Change

Policy Consideration

2. What is the "right" number of police officers for Seattle

City (sorted by officers most to least)	Population	Violent Crime Rate	Property Crime Rate	Sworn Officers	Percent Female	Officers per 1,000	Police Budget (1)	Rank - Spending per officer (2)
Washington, DC	693,000	746	3,070	3,388	23%	4.9	$573M	8
Boston, MA	671,000	582	1,908	2,172	17%	3.2	$453M	7
Baltimore, MD	563,000	1,346	3,981	2,051	18%	3.6	$593M	6
San Francisco, CA	815,000	486	2,932	1,881	15%	2.3	$849M	2
Atlanta, GA	526,000	732	3,100	1,817	23%	3.5	$306M	9
San Diego, CA	1,409,000	372	1,538	1,757	17%	1.2	$680M	5
San Jose, CA	994,000	503	2,372	1,065	13%	1.1	$609M	1
Seattle, WA	792,000	698	4,419	1,064	14%	1.3	$465M	3
Portland, OR	631,000	694	5,036	814	18%	1.3	$317M	4

1. Budget data taken from 2025 budgets published on City websites. Rates are per 100,000.
2. Number of sworn divided by Police Budget. For discussion purposes only. This is not a valid metric to evaluate sworn police personnel investments. See narrative below.
3. All other data for 2025 as reported to the FBI and available at: *https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/home*

Policy Consideration

2. What is the "right" number of police officers for Seattle

Meliora Patrol-only Staffing Study: In 2025, Chief Shon Barnes commissioned Meliora Public Safety Consulting to conduct a data-driven analysis of SPD's patrol workload and develop precinct staffing recommendations. Meliora's recommended patrol staffing levels were calibrated to ensure that officers do not spend more than 60 percent of their time answering calls for service. The study does not provide a roadmap or method that SPD can use to improve some key patrol metrics/indicators (e.g., response times) beyond historical averages.

Meliora's recommended precinct staffing levels would increase patrol staffing by 153 officers and 16 Sergeants for a total increase of 169 officers. Such an increase would bring the 911 responder total to 662 officers. SPD operated its precincts at this staffing level prior to the 350 net separations that followed the pandemic.

2020-2026 Precinct Staffing (Patrol Staffing Only)

Date	911 Response	Patrol Proactive (Not logged into 911 system)	Total Patrol
Sept. 2020	668	26 (Bikes, Beats, ACT, CRT, Seattle Center*)	694
Aug. 2026	485	13 (Bikes and Seattle Center)	498

*ACT is the Anti-Crime Team, CRT is the Community Response Team

Policy Consideration

2. What is the "right" number of police officers for Seattle

When determining force size, deployment matters. The Meliora study recommends that approximately 60 percent of the total number of sworn officers in a department be assigned to the patrol function. It is also important to consider the growing impact of civilianization on officer workload as well as the value of diverting specific types of 911 calls away from sworn officers or reducing the amount of time that officers must spend on a call.

Sworn distribution in SPD

Units	% of Sworn
911 Responders	36.5%
Other Precinct-Based Patrol Officers	0.3%
Sergeants Supervising Patrol	5.9%

Non-Patrol Personnel:	
Investigative Units	13.2%
Specialty Units	8.7%
Operations Support	25.7%
Leadership	5.7%
Administrative	4.0%

Note: 19 Community Response Group officers that were previously counted under the "911 Responders" category. This group was moved under the Investigations Bureau in a departmental reorganization.

Policy Consideration

2. What is the "right" number of police officers for Seattle

Options:

A. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) on new police hires. Encourage SPD to use new officers to enhance/supplement patrol numbers to (1) reduce 911 response times and increase capacity to respond to 911 calls; and (2) add bike and proactive units to crime hot spots, including the 3rd Ave Pike/Pine area.

B. Adopt a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requesting an analysis of the deployment of SPD officers outside of patrol functions. This SLI could request SPD to engage with a consultant or use internal resources to determine how to staff various policing functions outside of patrol.

C. No Change

Policy Consideration

(Slide 1/2)

3. Reductions to Recruitment Media/Marketing and the pause in hiring incentives

The 2027–2028 Proposed Budget cuts $2.4 million in 2027 and $3.5 million in 2028 from SPD's recruitment efforts. These reductions eliminate funding for hiring incentives—$7,500 for recruits and $50,000 for laterals—and the media and marketing resources added in 2023 to boost officer hiring.

- SPD's June 2026 Recruitment and Retention report includes survey data from entry-level candidates who had not yet taken the police exam. Fewer than 15 percent of recruits and laterals learned about SPD opportunities through traditional or social media.
- A significantly larger share reported that hiring incentives influenced their decision to apply: 60 percent of lateral hires were aware of the $50,000 bonus before applying, and 64 percent of entry-level hires said the incentive factored into their decision.

In February 2024, the Seattle Office of Innovation & Performance published a formal evaluation of the hiring incentive program. Survey results show that all but two hires considered incentive pay at least somewhat important in their decision to become a police officer. Although, on average, incentive pay ranked below salary and benefits.

Policy Consideration

3. Reductions to Recruitment Media/Marketing and the pause in hiring incentives

Options:

A. Restore media and marketing funding:

- $2.0 million in 2027 and $2.0 million in 2028

B. Restore hiring incentive for recruits and laterals through 2028:

- $955,000 in 2027 and $2.0 million in 2028
- This option assumes that the Council adopts Option C from the Staffing section and continues to hire 12 recruits per month and 2 laterals per month.
- The second payment of the 2028 hiring bonuses would create costs of $1.4 million in the 2029-30 biennium.

C. Restore hiring incentive for laterals only through 2028:

- $550,000 in 2027 and $1.1 million in 2028
- The second payment of the 2028 hiring bonuses would create costs of $1.4 million in 2029.

D. No Change

Policy Consideration

(Slide 1/3)

4. Parking Enforcement Officers

As noted above, the 2027-2028 Proposed Budget decreases appropriation authority by $1.1 million and eliminates 9.0 FTE vacant Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) positions. These nine positions represent approximately half of the PEO vacancies that have existed since 2020.

- Each PEO typically writes enough infractions/tickets in one year to create $200,000 in fine revenue, while only costing the City $115,000 in salary and benefits. Nonetheless, SPD has an incentive to keep PEO positions vacant to create salary savings needed for cut targets.
- The PEO vacancy problem is creating at least two issues for the City: (1) SPD is providing a lower level of service when managing the right-of-way, enforcing parking regulations, and performing other related activities; and (2) the City is not taking full advantage of recent collective bargaining changes that allow PEOs to staff special events in place of sworn officers.

Policy Consideration

4. Parking Enforcement Officers

The Executive has not completed a violation capture rate study to determine if the Parking Enforcement Unit is effectively enforcing the right of way. A count of citations issued by PEOs – pre- and post-pandemic – suggests that additional filled positions could better enforce the right of way.

History of PEO staffing & Citation writing

Year	Number of PEOs	Citation Count
2018	92	430,317
2019	95	448,698
2023	77	358,126
2024	78	363,083

Policy Consideration

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4. Parking Enforcement Officers

Options:

A. Adopt Statement of Legislative Intent that requires SPD to report on changes instituted to the PEO hiring process.

B. No Change

Policy Consideration

5. Civilian Staffing in the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC)

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget decreases funding for three of nine vacant positions in the RTCC that were added in the 2026 Adopted Budget, although no position authority is eliminated. SPD plans to hire for the six remaining funded vacancies in early 2027.

- The Executive has indicated that the three unfunded positions would have provided coverage for long-term vacancies and room for growth in the program. SPD staff have said that short-term vacancies (e.g., sick leave and vacation) can be covered with the other RTCC personnel.

Options:

A. Restore funding for 3.0 FTE in the Real Time Crime Center:
   - $511,000 in 2027 and $517,000 in 2028
   - Ongoing costs of approximately $517,000 in 2029

B. No Change

Policy Consideration

6. Civilian Positions in the Criminal Investigation Bureau

This item decreases appropriation authority by $1.1 million and eliminates 7.0 FTE civilian investigative support positions added in the 2026 Adopted Budget. A total of 14 civilian positions were added, 7.0 FTE in 2025 and 7.0 FTE in 2026, to assist SPD Detectives with homicide, robbery, and gun crime investigations.

Options:

A. Restore funding and position authority for 7.0 FTE in the Criminal Investigations Bureau:
   - $1.1 million in 2027 and $1.1 million 2028
   - Ongoing costs of approximately $1.1 million in 2029

B. No Change

Policy Consideration

(Slide 1/3)

7. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and 30x30 Positions

This item decreases appropriation authority by $207,000 and eliminates 1.0 FTE vacant position intended to serve as a DEI Officer; and eliminates an additional 1.0 FTE unfunded vacant position intended to support the 30x30 Workgroup.

- The 1.0 FTE DEI Officer position was added in the 2026 Adopted Budget but was never filled. This position would have made permanent a term-limited position that had been in use since 2022 but expired in August of 2025.

- The Council added to the 2026 Proposed Budget a position that would serve as a 30x30 Program coordinator. The position add was accompanied by a proviso that would require SPD to fund the position using savings from other areas in its budget. SPD did not fill the position. The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget eliminates the position.

Policy Consideration

7. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and 30x30 Positions

- SPD has made progress by hiring and directing external partners that advanced childcare and advertising initiatives, and by changing the way it teaches defensive tactics, equips women, and provides facilities for new mothers. Outreach to women through advertising, target marketing and events increased in 2026.
- As of August 2026, however, SPD has not made as much progress with its goals to establish a mentorship program, identify flexible shift options or launch a professional development program that provides training and career advancement opportunities for female officers. The department and its 30x30 Workgroup continue to work in these areas, which are difficult and complex undertakings for staff that must advance the 30x30 Initiative while performing in their assigned shifts and regular duties.

SPD Hiring by Gender

	2023	**2024**	**2025**	**2026** (Jan-June)
Sworn Hires Male	54	72	148	73
Sworn Hires Female	7	12	17	14
Percent Female	11%	14%	10%	16%

Policy Consideration

7. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and 30x30 Positions

Options:

A. Add 1.0 FTE and add $207,000 in 2027 and in 2028 for 1.0 FTE DEI Officer:
   - Ongoing costs of approximately $207,000 million in 2029

B. Add 1.0 FTE and add $207,000 in 2027 and in 2028 for 1.0 FTE 30x30 Coordinator:
   - Ongoing costs of approximately $207,000 million in 2029

C. No Change

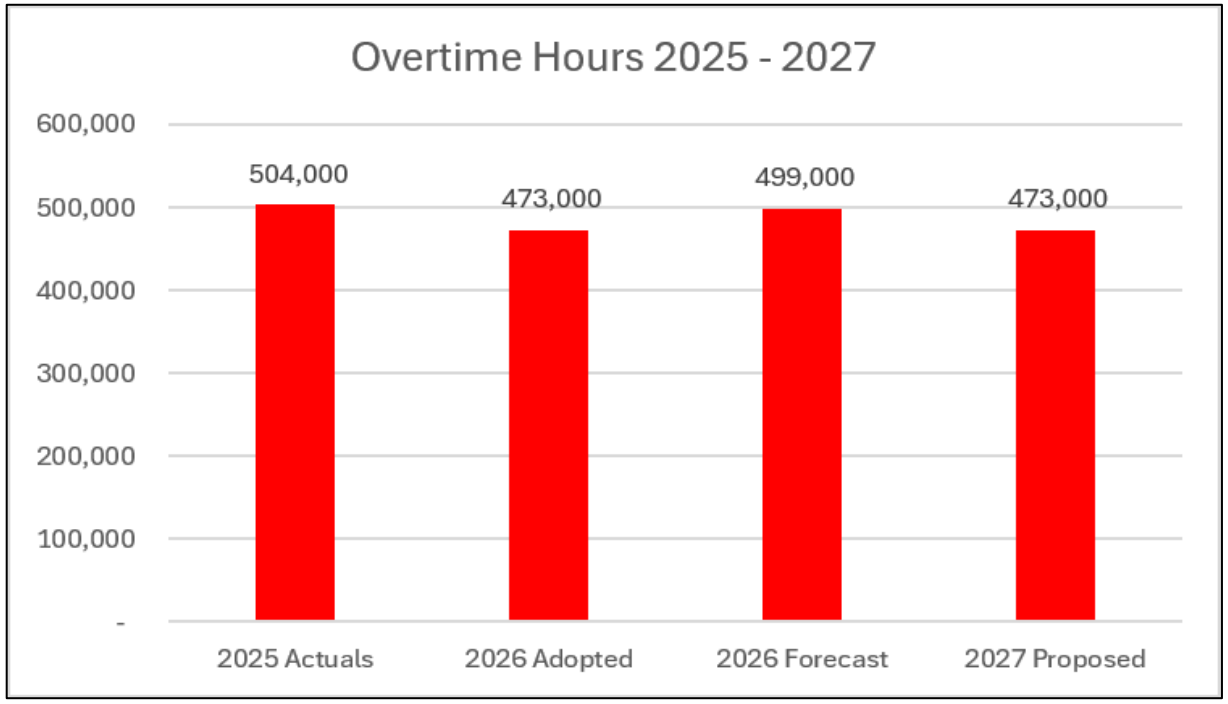
Policy Consideration

(Slide 1/2)

8. Overtime

The 2027 Proposed Budget includes no change in funded hours when compared to the 2026 Adopted Budget.

Overtime hours budget and actuals:



Policy Consideration

(Slide 2/2)

8. Overtime

The 2027 Proposed Budget again funds 473,000 overtime hours. If SPD continues to use approximately 500,000 hours annually, the 17,000-hour gap would create an estimated $2.1 million deficit. With continued reductions to civilian salary savings, SPD will have limited ability to absorb any shortfall and may again need additional authority in the 2027 Year-end Supplemental Budget.

Options:

A. Add $2.1 million for overtime

B. No Change

Policy Consideration

(Slide 1/2)

2026 Year-End Supplemental Budget

SPD has indicated that it requires additional appropriations to stay within 2026 Adopted Budget appropriation levels. Following are some adjustments that the department has requested to make sure it remains within budget.

- **$2.1 million Supplemental Appropriation for Overtime**: This appropriation increase is necessary to fund overtime costs above adopted budget levels. Overtime overages were previously funded with sworn salary savings, but increased sworn hiring has eliminated the savings to fund these costs.
- **$2.1 million PEO proviso release:** The Council added $2.1 million in funding for PEO hires, with a proviso that prohibited use of the funding until PEOs were hired and had written tickets sufficient to create revenue to back the appropriation. The proviso stated that Council may lift the proviso in a future Supplemental Budget. The PEOs were not hired. By lifting the proviso now, SPD would be accessing additional unbacked authority that would be used to balance the 2026 budget.

Policy Consideration

2026 Year-End Supplemental Budget

SPD has requested $1.8 million in additional appropriation authority for items that were added to its budget without a dedicated funding source, and which had been previously funded with civilian or sworn salary savings:

- $634,000 for Chief of Police separation costs
- $123,000 Gas Mask Replacement
- $300,000 for Amazon Web Service (AWS) Cloud Costs
- $100,000 for radio encryption
- $125,000 for evidence freezer design
- $500,000 for cellular costs

Questions?