Seattle City Council
Central Staff

Seattle City Council 2026 Budget Process

Policy Considerations

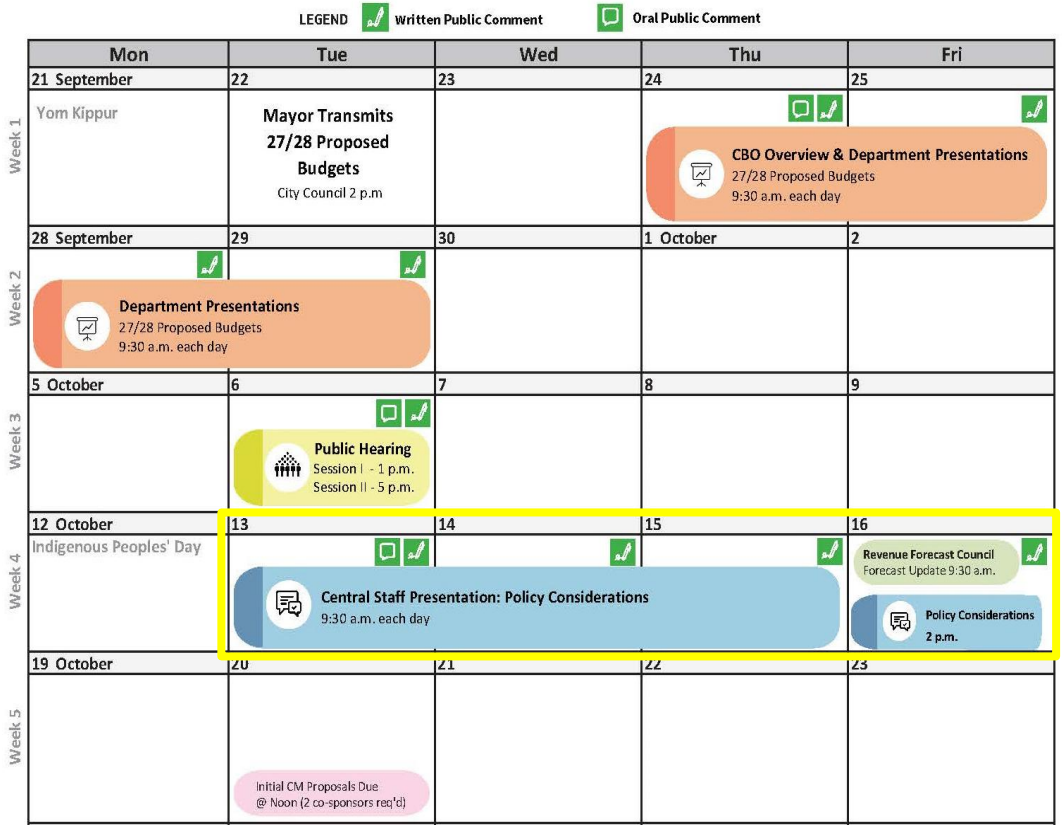
Lish Whitson, Central Staff Director
Calvin Chow, Central Staff Deputy Director
October 13, 2026

Council's Budget Review and Adoption Process

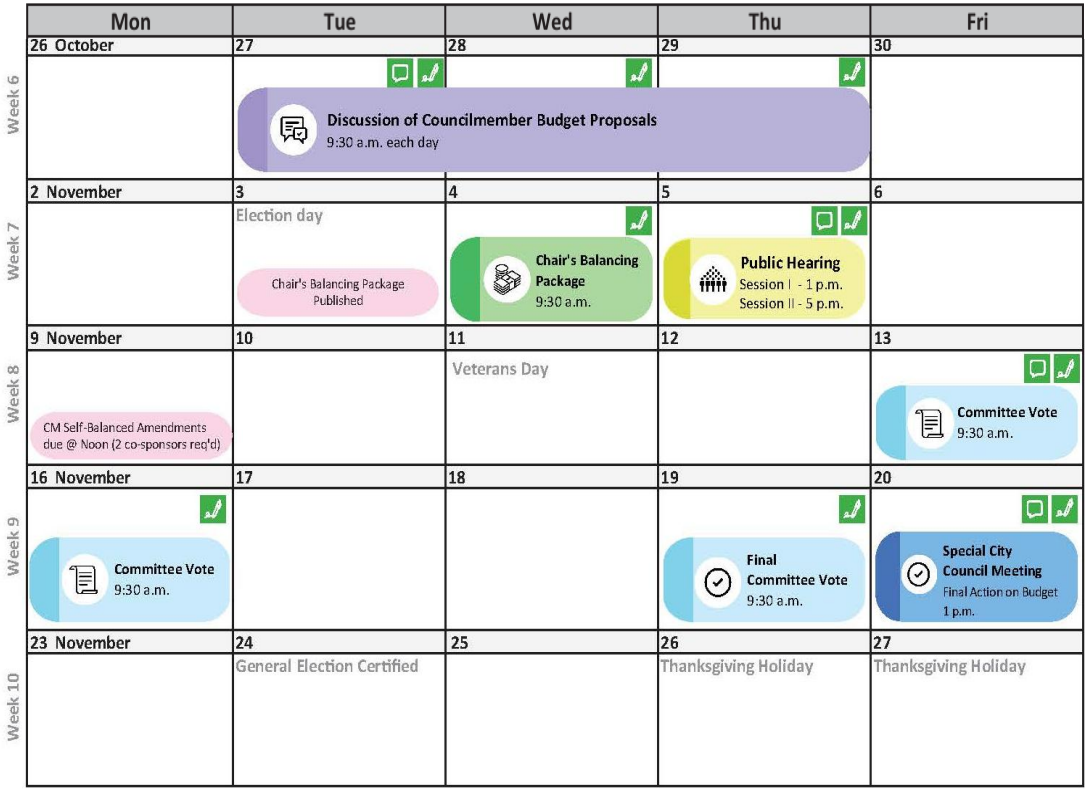
Step 1 Week 1-2	**Mayor transmits 2027/2028 Proposed Budgets** **CBO and Department presentations**
Step 2 Week 3-4	**Central Staff policy considerations** **Revenue Forecast Update**
Step 3 Week 5-6	**Discussion of Councilmember Budget Proposals**
Step 4 Week 7	**Presentation of Chair's Balancing Package**
Step 5 Week 8-9	**Self-balanced amendments to Chair's package** **Select Budget Committee vote**
Step 6 Week 9	**Final Council vote**

Fall 2026 Budget Calendar

Weeks 1 - 5



Weeks 6 - 10



Step 2
Week 3-4

Policy Considerations and Revenue Forecast Update

Central Staff Overview and Policy Considerations (Day 1 – Day 3)

- General overview of 2027/2028 Proposed Budgets and GF/PET balancing strategy
- Presentation of select departments by CS analysts.
- Papers for departments not presented will be attached to Day 3 agenda
- Opportunity for committee discussion, and for CMs to provide direction to staff on issues and amendments they are considering.

Friday, October (Day 4)

- Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (separate from Select Budget Committee)
- Tentative Select Budget Committee meeting – overflow, revenue.

Step 2
Week 3-4

Policy Considerations & Revenue Forecast Update Schedule

	Tuesday, October 13	Wednesday, October 14	Thursday, October 15	Friday, October 16
Session I	Introduction & Overview	Office of Housing	Seattle Police Department	**Revenue Forecast Council Meets** *(Select Budget Committee will convene at 1 p.m.)*
	GF Balancing Analysis / PET	Seattle Parks and Recreation		
	Voluntary Separation	Seattle Center		

Session II	Office of Planning & Community Development	Seattle Department of Transportation	Seattle Fire Department	*Tentative* Revenue Discussion
	Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections		Community Assisted Response & Engagement	
	Office for Civil Rights		Human Services Department / Unified Care Team	

Step 3
Week 5-6

Presentation of Councilmember Budget Proposals

Deadline for Initial CM Proposals: Tuesday, October 20 at Noon
Requires two co-sponsors for submittal.

Central Staff will prepare Council Budget Actions (CBAs), Statement of Legislative Intent (SLIs), and amendments to budget legislation for committee discussion October 27-29.

- Each submitted CM proposal will be discussed in committee
- CS will provide a summary description of the proposal
- CMs will provide the rationale for their proposals
- Additional CMs may wish to signal co-sponsorship (in open session) during committee

Budget Chair will consider the discussed CM proposals
for inclusion in his ***Chair's Balancing Package***

Context of the Proposed Budget

Economic Conditions

- Economic uncertainty persists. National and local employment, stock market, real estate trends, and federal government.
- Revenue Forecast Council will meet on Friday (October 16th).
    - October revenue forecast will establish revenue parameters for Council's final budget actions.

Budget Situation

- The 2026 Adopted Budget projected a 2027 deficit in the General Fund of $149 million.
- Consistent with Council's legislated direction, the 2027-2028 Proposed Budget projects non-negative General Fund and JumpStart Fund balances through 2030.
    - Proposal relies on some one-time adjustments to balance (e.g., housing cash management, use of fund balances).
    - Central Staff projects a remaining structural deficit (revenues short of expenditures and anticipated reserve needs) of $23 million in 2027 and $18 million in 2028.

On-going Policy Challenges

- Budget Sustainability
- Homelessness
- Downtown and Neighborhood Recovery
- Housing Affordability
- Public Safety
- Real Estate Market

Questions?