Office of Sustainability and Environment

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Department Overview

The Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) develops and implements Citywide environmental policies and programs that propel Seattle toward a sustainable, equitable, and climate pollution-free future. OSE collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders to advance healthy communities and facilitate a just transition from fossil fuels, while prioritizing people and communities most affected by economic, racial, and environmental injustices. OSE's work focuses on the following areas:

Climate and Environmental Justice: The City of Seattle aims to reduce total core greenhouse gas emissions 58% by 2030 and to become totally carbon neutral by 2050. OSE spearheads policies and programs for achieving these goals, including transitioning buildings to 100% clean energy, advancing zero carbon transportation, and investing in green jobs. In this role, OSE coordinates implementation of the Seattle Green New Deal, the One Seattle Climate Justice Agenda, and the Equity and Environment Initiative.

Healthy & Resilient Communities: OSE works with key stakeholders to support sustainable communities. The office administers the Fresh Bucks and Healthy Food in Schools programs to provide equitable access to healthy, affordable, culturally relevant food. OSE also fosters leadership and interdepartmental coordination within the City of Seattle to help maintain, preserve, and restore Seattle's urban canopy.

Citywide Coordination: OSE coordinates interdepartmental efforts to advance a healthy, equitable, and sustainable environment. These efforts include the Duwamish Valley Program, as well as interdepartmental planning around the Green New Deal, urban forestry, and energy efficiency. OSE is responsible for coordinating four prominent Boards and Commissions: the Urban Forestry Commission, the Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board, the Environmental Justice Committee, and the Green New Deal Oversight Board.

Budget Snapshot

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	10,658,963	14,843,713	14,189,985	14,215,735
Other Funding - Operating	18,734,244	18,944,170	24,028,354	19,808,553
Total Operations	**29,393,207**	**33,787,883**	**38,218,339**	**34,024,288**
Total Appropriations	**29,393,207**	**33,787,883**	**38,218,339**	**34,024,288**
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	54.50	55.50	55.50	55.50

** 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.*

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Budget Overview

The 2027-28 Proposed Budget focuses on maintaining OSE's core commitments around climate, environment, and sustainable communities. The proposed budget includes significant new funding to support food security and maintains OSE's major programs and commitments surrounding climate and the Seattle Green New Deal. The net effect of these changes is that OSE's proposed budget will increase by $4.4 million in 2027 and 2028.

Enhanced Food Access Support

Supporting food access and addressing rising food insecurity is a priority for Mayor Wilson and the proposed budget increases funding for:

- Continuing the 2026 expansion of the Fresh Bucks voucher program by including $6.3 million in ongoing General Fund funding. This funding supports more than 8,000 additional households and sustains an increased monthly benefit of $60.
- Universal school meals in Seattle Public Schools during the 2027-28 academic year with $4 million from the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy.

Continued Green New Deal and Climate Programming

The 2027-2028 Proposed Budget reflects difficult decisions made to stabilize the City's financial position and put the budget on sustainable footing. These reductions prioritize direct service delivery where possible.

Three major changes are proposed in the 2027-2028 Proposed Budget to help address the budget deficit:

- Shifting $640,000 of staffing and administration costs for the Buildings and Energy program from General Fund to the JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax Fund (JumpStart tax);
- Adding $400,000 of JumpStart tax to support staffing and administration for the Municipal Energy Efficiency Program (MEEP);
- Reducing by $300,000 (out of $4.5 million) Building Navigator Grants for compliance with Seattle's Building Emissions Performance Standards Greenhouse Gas Intensity Targets.

Additionally, this budget proposes transferring $200,000 JumpStart tax for Duwamish Valley Small Business Support to the Office of Economic Development (OED) to consolidate workforce and business efforts in that department. It is anticipated that place-based business support in the Duwamish Valley will continue.

Overall, the proposed budget allocates $16.5 million of JumpStart tax for Green New Deal programming. This includes:

- $4.9 million for climate staffing and administration (including the $1.4 million in funding shifts described above);
- $4.2 million for continued Building Navigator Grants;
- $1.25 million for the Environmental Justice Fund;
- $1 million for Clean Energy Apprenticeships;
- $800,000 for Clean Heat Program heat pump rebates;
- $500,000 for Duwamish Valley Program Youth Leadership
- $300,000 for Duwamish Valley urban forestry;

Green New Deal spending in other departments includes $1.8 million in the Office of Housing (OH) for fully-funded heat pump conversions from oil home heating through the Clean Heat Program, and $1.1 million in debt service costs in Finance and Administrative Services for EV charging infrastructure.

Incremental Budget Changes

Office of Sustainability and Environment

	Dollars	FTE
2026 Adopted Budget	**33,787,883**	**55.50**
Baseline		
Baseline Adjustment to Remove 2026 One-Time Items	(6,665,628)	-
Technical corrections to align with new project structure	-	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	885,063	-
Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate	(104,474)	-
Proposed Operating		
Continue Fresh Bucks Increased Service Levels	6,275,495	-
FEPP Levy Funding for Universal School Meals at Seattle Public Schools in the 2027-28 School Year	4,140,000	-
Shift Building and Energy Policy Staffing Costs to Jumpstart Payroll Expense Tax Funding	-	-
Fund Municipal Energy Efficiency Program Staff with Jumpstart Payroll Expense Tax	400,000	-
Shift Duwamish Valley Small Business Support to Office of Economic Development	(200,000)	-
Reduce Funding for Building Navigator Grants	(300,000)	-
Proposed Technical		
Align Department Revenues with the April Forecast	-	-
Align Department Revenues with the August Forecast	-	-
Total Incremental Changes	**$4,430,456**	**-**
Total 2027 Proposed Budget	**$38,218,339**	**55.50**

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

<u>Baseline</u>

Baseline Adjustment to Remove 2026 One-Time Items

Expenditures	$(6,665,628)

This is a technical adjustment that removes 2026 budget actions funded on a one-time basis from OSE's 2027 and 2028 baselines. This comprises: $6,275,000 for the expansion of Fresh Bucks, $200,000 in one-time support for farmers markets, $100,000 to support an Urban Forestry Statement of Legislative Intent (evaluating tree canopy policies and department structuring and resourcing), and $75,000 in one-time support for climate resiliency planning at the Georgetown Neighborhood Center. These actions are all funded with General Fund.

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Technical corrections to align with new project structure

Expenditures -

This item makes technical corrections to align project and account budgets within OSE. There is no net budgetary impact from these changes.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures $885,063

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.

Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate

Expenditures $(104,474)

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.

Proposed Operating

Continue Fresh Bucks Increased Service Levels

Expenditures $6,275,495

This item increases General Fund appropriation authority to maintain higher Fresh Bucks service levels that were funded on a one-time basis in 2026. This increased funding allows Fresh Bucks to continue supporting a monthly benefit level of $60 (an increase from $40 prior to 2026) and to maintain higher enrollments of 8,000 households or more. This action also provides ongoing funding for OSE to hire a permanent Customer Service Representative to provide customer support. OSE will use an existing vacant position to fill this role.

Fresh Bucks is a healthy food program that helps Seattle residents afford fruits and vegetables. The program provides income-eligible enrolled households with monthly vouchers to buy fruits and vegetables at more than 57 participating retailers. Currently, Fresh Bucks has nearly 20,000 households enrolled and receiving benefits with a total budget over $11 million.

FEPP Levy Funding for Universal School Meals at Seattle Public Schools in the 2027-28 School Year

Expenditures $4,140,000

This item provides funding from the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy for OSE to administer contracts with Seattle Public Schools for universal school meals. This action supports the Mayor's plan to fund early implementation of universal school meals at Seattle Public Schools in advance of anticipated future state funding. An additional $3.6 million was provided to OSE in the 2026 Midyear Supplemental Budget for the 2026-27 school year.

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Shift Building and Energy Policy Staffing Costs to Jumpstart Payroll Expense Tax Funding

Expenditures	-

This items shifts $640,000 in General Fund funding that currently supports labor and administration for the Buildings and Energy Policy to the JumpStart tax. This aligns funding for staff with program funding that is JumpStart funded. This funding shift helps preserve limited General Fund resources while avoiding reductions to Green New Deal-supported programs.

Fund Municipal Energy Efficiency Program Staff with Jumpstart Payroll Expense Tax

Expenditures	$400,000

This item provides ongoing JumpStart tax to support staffing for the Municipal Energy Efficiency Program (MEEP). This funding currently supports two full-time positions, who coordinate and advise capital departments such as Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), Seattle Public Library, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Center on building upgrades and system replacements. They also identify grant opportunities. In prior years, these positions were supported by Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding formerly budgeted in Finance and Administrative Services (FAS). With REET facing significant revenue challenges, maintaining this staff and programming requires alternative funding. For the broader MEEP program in 2027 and 2028, OSE will work with the capital departments to prioritize critical energy upgrades within their existing capital budgets.

Shift Duwamish Valley Small Business Support to Office of Economic Development

Expenditures	$(200,000)

This item shifts funding for small business supports in the Duwamish Valley to the Office of Economic Development (OED). The Duwamish Valley Program's economic opportunity work currently supports over 70 small, mostly BIPOC- and immigrant-owned businesses through tailored technical assistance such as marketing support, navigation for Public Health requirements, and connecting businesses to Small Business Administration grants and the City's Storefront Repair Fund. This funding also supports business district activation events and local job connections.

Transferring this funding aligns and consolidates small business supports in the OED. OSE currently coordinates with the OED to administer this funding and will continue to maintain a partnership to ensure the program continues to meet the Duwamish Valley Action Plan's Economic Opportunity and Jobs Priority goals. No net funding reduction will occur as a result of this transfer.

Reduce Funding for Building Navigator Grants

Expenditures	$(300,000)

This item reduces funding for the City's Building Navigator Decarbonization Grants program. Building Navigator grants provide under-resourced building owners with the capital and engineering support needed to meet upcoming emissions reduction targets imposed by the Seattle Building Emissions Performance Standard (BEPS) law. This reduction helps address the deficit and helps avoid higher-impact reductions in other Green New Deal and climate-related JumpStart tax funded programming. For 2027 and 2028, at least $4.2 million will continue to be dedicated on an ongoing basis to support early compliance with BEPS Greenhouse Gas Intensity (GHGI) targets for affordable housing or buildings owned by small nonprofits. This level of funding will be sufficient to support 9-16 facilities per annual award cycle.

Proposed Technical

Align Department Revenues with the April Forecast

Revenues	$25,000

This is a technical adjustment to capture centrally projected and forecast revenue increments for OSE.

Office of Sustainability and Environment

Align Department Revenues with the August Forecast

Revenues $(620,892)

This is a technical adjustment to capture centrally projected and forecast revenue increments for OSE.

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
OSE - BO-SE-X1000 - Office of Sustainability and Environment				
00100 - General Fund	10,658,963	14,843,713	14,189,985	14,215,735
00155 - Sweetened Beverage Tax Fund	6,234,513	6,427,262	6,510,331	6,536,570
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	12,499,731	12,516,909	13,378,023	13,271,983
17876 - FEPP Levy 2025	-	-	4,140,000	-
Total for BSL: BO-SE-X1000	**29,393,207**	**33,787,883**	**38,218,339**	**34,024,288**
Department Total	**29,393,207**	**33,787,883**	**38,218,339**	**34,024,288**
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	**54.50**	**55.50**	**55.50**	**55.50**

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of Sustainability and Environment

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	10,658,963	14,843,713	14,189,985	14,215,735
00155 - Sweetened Beverage Tax Fund	6,234,513	6,427,262	6,510,331	6,536,570
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	12,499,731	12,516,909	13,378,023	13,271,983
17876 - FEPP Levy 2025	-	-	4,140,000	-
Budget Totals for OSE	**29,393,207**	**33,787,883**	**38,218,339**	**34,024,288**

Revenue Overview

2027 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
331110	Direct Fed Grants	762,648	-	-	-
334010	State Grants	1,152,444	-	-	-
337010	Grants & Contr From Local Govt	115,571	-	-	-
341900	General Government-Other Rev	3,886,326	4,250,635	3,629,743	3,654,439
347030	Event Admission Fees	(540)	-	-	-
350180	Misc Fines & Penalties	61,000	20,000	45,000	15,000
360900	Miscellaneous Revs-Other Rev	175,541	-	-	-
367010	Private Grants & Contr	23,997	-	-	-
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		**6,176,987**	**4,270,635**	**3,674,743**	**3,669,439**
Total OSE Resources		**6,176,987**	**4,270,635**	**3,674,743**	**3,669,439**

Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OSE - BO-SE-X1000 - Office of Sustainability and Environment

The purpose of the Office of Sustainability and Environment Budget Summary Level is to coordinate interdepartmental environmental sustainability initiatives, identify and develop next generation policies and programs, and lead the City's climate change action planning to move towards carbon neutrality.

Program Expenditures	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Office of Sustainability and Environment	29,393,207	33,787,883	38,218,339	34,024,288
Total	**29,393,207**	**33,787,883**	**38,218,339**	**34,024,288**
Full-time Equivalents Total*	54.50	55.50	55.50	55.50

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