

Proposed Amendments to the 2023-2024 Proposed Budget

For Council Discussion November 14, 2022

Reference Number	Who Asked for Assessment	Proposed Amendment to:
AM-1	City Manager/Interim City Manager (If Prop 1 Passes)	<p><i>Increase General Fund appropriations by \$791,289 and increase FTE count by 2.90 FTE to address critical operational needs by adding the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information Technology Specialist (1.0 FTE)</i> • <i>Video/Web Specialist (0.5 FTE; Extra Help Conversion)</i> • <i>Recreation Specialist from 0.6 FTE to 1.0 FTE</i> • <i>Human Resources Specialist (1.0 FTE)</i>
AM-2	CMs Mork, Pobe, & Roberts	<i>Increase General Fund appropriations by \$50,000 funded by one-time general fund reserve to fund an update to the City's Urban Tree Canopy Assessment in 2023.</i>
AM-3	CMs Mork & Pobe	<i>Increase General Fund appropriations by \$200,000 funded by one-time general fund reserve to fund completion of the City's street tree inventory in 2023/2024.</i>
AM-4	CM Mork	<i>Increase General Capital funding by \$362,000 to fund small road safety projects funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund.</i>
AM-5	CM Roberts	<i>Increase the Roads Capital Fund budget by \$1,850,000 and add a 0.5 3-year limited term FTE engineer to complete the sidewalk along NE 200th Street from 30th to 25th Avenue NE funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund.</i>
AM-6	CM Roberts	<i>Increase the Roads Capital Fund budget by \$990,000 and add a 0.5 3-year limited term FTE engineer to complete the sidewalk along Wallingford from N 195th Street to N 192nd Street funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund.</i>
AM-7	CM Roberts	<i>Increase the Roads Capital Fund budget by \$960,000 and add a 0.5 3-year limited term FTE engineer to complete the sidewalk along Wallingford from N 155th Street to N 150th Street funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund.</i>
AM-8	CM Roberts	<i>Increase the General Fund budget by \$75,000 ongoing and add a 0.5 FTE to support social media and digital communications supported by additional property tax revenue from Proposition 1.</i>
AM-9	CM Roberts	<i>Increase the General Capital Budget by \$700,000 supported by a one-time contribution from the General Fund to install a synthetic turf field instead of the currently planned grass field at Shoreview Park.</i>
AM-10	CM Roberts	<i>Increase the General Fund Budget by \$75,000 ongoing to supplement contracted direct mental health support, which would be supported by additional property tax revenue from Proposition 1.</i>

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Item/Issue: AM-1. Submitted by City Manager Debby Terry (Retired) and Interim City Manager John Norris If Levy Lid Lift Is Approved

Proposed Amendment:

Increase General Fund appropriations by \$791,289 and increase FTE count by 2.90 FTE to address critical operational needs by adding the following:

- *Information Technology Specialist (1.0 FTE)*
- *Video/Web Specialist (0.5 FTE; Extra Help Conversion)*
- *Recreation Specialist from 0.6 FTE to 1.0 FTE*
- *Human Resources Specialist (1.0 FTE)*

Staff Response:

Beginning on September 19th and throughout the budget deliberations, staff have acknowledged that there are many critical needs that have been identified that are not being included in the proposed budget. Many of these items were discussed with Council as part of the Council's 2022 Annual Strategic Planning Workshop and as part of the levy lid lift discussions. These items were identified in the proposed budget and in Department presentations. As part of the proposed budget, City Manager recommended that Council include these items as amendments to the proposed budget at the time of adoption if the Levy Lid Lift was approved by voters:

- *IT Support – addition of a 1.0 FTE IT Specialist:*
Centralized IT staffing has not grown commensurate with the increase in technology demands and other City staffing. An IT Workload Analysis, completed this year by Rick Berman Consulting, recommended the addition of 2.75 FTEs to support existing applications and infrastructure. This position is deemed the most critical of those recommended additions
- *IT Support – extra help conversion to 0.5 FTE Audio Visual/Web Technician:*
To address increased needs of Hybrid Conferencing for public and internal meetings. This addition is partially supported by the conversion of extra help budget.
- *Human Resources (HR) - addition of a 1.0 FTE Human Resource Analyst:*
Staffing levels in HR have remained flat at 3.0 FTEs for several years. Since 2017 the City has absorbed the former Ronald Wastewater District employees, created an in-house Grounds Maintenance Program, had the formation of its first labor union with the City's maintenance workers, and has added other staff in several departments. The City Manager is recommending the addition of a 1.0 Human Resource Analyst to support the increased workload related to the increased staffing levels and the addition of a bargaining unit.
- *Recreation Support – Increase of Existing 0.60 Recreation Specialist II to 1.0 FTE:*
Increase 0.60 FTE General Programs Recreation Specialist II to 1.0 FTE to sustain program levels for youth camps and increase capacity to meet some of the increased demand for adult programs.

It is important to note that even with these additions there are important needs that will not be addressed with this budget that are not being proposed due to funding constraints identified in the 10YFSM. These include additional IT staffing, additional housing and human services staffing, asset management support and additional recreation staffing.

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Item/Issue: AM-2. Submitted by CM's Mork, Pobee, & Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

Increase General Fund appropriations by \$50,000 funded by one-time general fund reserve to fund an update to the City's Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

Staff Response:

The last two tree canopy studies occurred in 2011 and 2018 which would put an update schedule on a 7-year cycle. The next update is tentatively planned for 2025 but we may want to accelerate this schedule. The Sound Transit Lite Rail project has had significant impacts on tree canopy in the City and is a major driver behind the update schedule. There are two options to consider (1) Do the study in 2025 which was our original plan to capture the significant replanting that ST is undertaking. This timing may or may not capture many of these changes due to maturity of newly planted trees. (2) Accelerate the schedule and do the assessment in 2023 and then again in 2027. The former saves funding for other priorities but may be less informative. The latter would cost more over time, with the hope that the comparison between the two studies would provide better and more valuable data as well as establish a tighter, 5-year update schedule. Staff are supportive of the accelerated timeline.

Item/Issue: AM-3. Submitted by CM's Mork & Pobee

Proposed Amendment:

Increase General Fund appropriations by \$200,000 funded by one-time general fund reserve to fund completion of the City's Street tree inventory

Staff Response:

Staff have been working on the completion of the Street Tree Inventory over time using savings from the Parks Operating budget. This work was started as a pilot project. After successful completion of one neighborhood, staff have been continuing work as funding and vendor capacity allows. To date, the inventory has been completed for four (4) neighborhoods. Staff estimates that using our current vendor it would take approximately four years and cost \$120,000 to complete the inventory. If additional dedicated funding were available, staff would engage a larger vendor (at a higher cost) that could complete the inventory in a shorter period. Staff are supportive of this amendment.

Item/Issue: AM-4. Submitted by CM Mork

Proposed Amendment:

Increase General Capital Funding by \$362,000 to fund small road safety projects funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund

Staff Response:

The City Traffic Engineer believes the most beneficial safety improvements include:

- Pedestrian crossing improvements (i.e., curb extensions, pedestrian activated flashing beacons, leading pedestrian intervals, median refuges)
- Automated speed enforcement (arterial street school zones)
- Road diets (4 to 3 lane conversions)
- Street lighting – in some cases new poles/fixtures are needed to light priority locations (intersections/crossings) where existing utility poles are not present. Lighting efforts that

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require new pole/fixture installation cannot be accommodated within current safety or operational program resources.

One primary challenge with delivering traffic safety projects through the Traffic Safety CIP is staff resource. The Traffic Services group has remained at 3 FTE for at least 10 years, while workload has increased considerably. While an additional FTE was added in 2022, this position is intended to address workload associated with the increase in development activity and will not have capacity to address additional projects. Currently, the Traffic Safety project budget can only accommodate about 1-2 small projects per year and the cost of many of the treatments listed above exceed current staffing and budget resources.

To deliver meaningful traffic safety projects on a regular basis would require about \$425,000 per year ongoing (to cover 1 dedicated FTE -Engineer and \$250,000 annually project).

Staff have indicated that with current staffing levels they would not be able to deliver any additional projects. Therefore, without the inclusion of ongoing funding for an FTE, staff recommend a more holistic discussion on options for improving traffic safety.

Item/Issue: AM-5 Submitted by CM Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

*Increase the Roads Capital Fund budget by \$1,850,000 and add a *0.50 3-year limited term engineer to complete the sidewalk along 200th St NE from 30th NE to 25th Ave NE funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund*

Staff Response:

Pros:

- Provides sidewalk serving Cascade K-8 school
- Fills gaps in sidewalks and connects to existing sidewalk in front of school
- New sidewalk is a high priority for the community

Cons

- This is a medium priority in the pedestrian priority plan. This would place this project ahead of other high priority projects.
- No existing staff capacity to take on this new project. Would jeopardize implementation of New Sidewalk Program or other capital projects. Cost includes the addition of a .5 limited term position.

Item/Issue: AM-6 Submitted by CM Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

*Increase the Roads Capital Fund budget by \$990,000 and add a *0.50 3-year limited term engineer to complete the sidewalk along Wallingford from N 195th to N 192nd funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund.*

Staff Response:

Pros

- Provides sidewalk serving Echo Lake Elementary
- New sidewalk is a high priority for the community

Cons

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- This is a medium priority in the pedestrian priority plan. This would place this project ahead of other high priority projects
- No existing staff capacity to take on this new project. Could jeopardize implementation of New Sidewalk Program or other capital projects. Cost includes the addition of a .5 limited term position.

Item/Issue: AM-7 Submitted by CM Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

*Increase the Roads Capital Fund budget by \$960,000 and add a *0.50 3- year limited term engineer to complete the sidewalk along Wallingford from N 155th to N 150th funded by a one-time contribution from the General Fund.*

Staff Response:

Pros

- Provides sidewalk serving Echo Lake Elementary
- New sidewalk is a high priority for the community

Cons

- This is a medium priority in the pedestrian priority plan. This would place this project ahead of other high priority projects
- No existing staff capacity to take on this new project. Could jeopardize implementation of New Sidewalk Program or other capital projects. Cost includes the addition of a .5 limited term position.

*Note: Regarding FTE's included for proposed amendment 5-7, staff anticipate that we would need one 1.0 Limited Term FTE 3-year Limited term employee to manage all three projects. However, because we can't hire less than a 0.50 FTE we included one 0.50 FTE with each project in case just one or two are approved. If all three projects were approved then we would only need a 1.0 and the cost of each project would be a little less.

Item/Issue: AM-8 Submitted by CM Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

*Increase the General Fund budget by \$75,000 ongoing and add a *0.50 FTE to support social media and digital communications supported by additional property tax revenue from Proposition 1.*

Staff Response:

Our current communications specialist spends about 10-15% of her time on social media. A social media coordinator focused on social media would be able to spend more time on producing and responding to social media and work more closely in coordinating with all the City's different social media accounts, but probably not quite enough for a .5 FTE position. However, if we were to expand the position to also include other digital communication, such as taking photos and producing videos (tasks that we usually contract out for) for social media, the website, and other print collateral, a .5 FTE position would make more sense. Such a position would free the communications specialist up to assist with more of the writing tasks currently performed by the communications program manager, such as Currents articles, talking points, press releases. That would in turn free up the communications program manager to engage in more strategic communications work.

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One of the unknowns is what will happen with social media moving forward. We aren't gaining a lot of new followers and are beginning to see some drop Twitter. With Twitter's uncertainty, we may no longer use it in the future. There are other options and a person dedicated to social media would have more bandwidth to investigate and explore them.

While this position would add value, the need for this position has not been fully evaluated or prioritized against other FTE needs throughout the organization. Additionally, the use of property tax revenues to support this position would result in a budget shortfall earlier in the forecast period.

Item/Issue: AM-9 Submitted by CM Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

Increase the General Capital Budget by \$700,000 supported by a one-time contribution from the General Fund to install a synthetic turf field instead of the currently planned grass field at Shoreview Park.

Staff Response:

Replacing the existing planned grass turf with synthetic turf is anticipated to cost an additional \$700,000. This provides additional playability in the winter and reduced maintenance. However, because this field will not be lit and is planned to be a non-scheduled playfield (pick-up games), the benefit is minimized. With maintenance savings over an 8-10 year life is anticipated to "break even". Because this project is already scheduled, we do not anticipate any FTE impact. The con to this proposal is that the designs for the parks in the early stages and there are already significant inflationary pressures that will need to be addressed. Additionally, there is some controversy regarding synthetic turf. Following are some additional pros and cons for Council consideration.

Pros

- Extended playability, simply more available use time which is improved when field is lighted
- Better wear tolerance
- Consistent "well maintained" appearance
- Eco friendly, doesn't require water, fertilizer, pesticides
- Potentially fewer injuries due to the cushioned subsurface support structure

Cons

- Heat island type of affect, synthetic turf fields tend to get significantly hotter than natural turf fields in mid-summer heat
- Concerns about potentially harmful chemicals from materials (crumb rubber, petroleum products)
- Concerns about the ability to sanitize - bacteria, pathogens, bodily fluids, etc
- Potentially more injuries due to better traction and less give in the surface
- Vandalism can be harder to mitigate

Item/Issue: AM-10 Submitted by CM Roberts

Proposed Amendment:

Increase the General Fund Budget by \$75,000 ongoing to supplement contracted direct mental health support. The addition would be supported by additional property tax revenue from Proposition 1.

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Staff Response:

The Youth and Teen Development Program currently offers about 20 hours/week of direct mental health support through a contract with the Center for Human Services using funds provided by a Best Starts for Kids grant from King County and supplemented by City Covid Recovery (ARPA) funding. Those hours are split between the Teen Center and Ballinger Homes. We anticipate that the cost of adding an additional 20 hours/week of direct mental health support would cost another \$75,000/year.

Access to mental health services--especially on demand and without a fee--provides a tremendous benefit to young people. The City currently contracts with the Center for Human Services who provides a mental health counselor for 20 hours per week. The Counselor is located at the Teen Center during after school hours every Monday through Thursday and is at Ballinger Homes after school on Fridays. She provides one-on-one counseling and support as requested by the teens; she proactively reaches out to those she sees might need some support; and she offers group activities (art therapy, music, games) a few times each month. Increasing that access by adding direct service hours would help to meet more of that need.

There are two cons to providing these funds as ongoing funding now. First is that this was not anticipated in the forecast and would create a shortfall in the final year of the forecast period. If this service is added as one-time funding, we will need to reduce level of service when that funding is no longer available. Additionally, the need for this service has not been evaluated or prioritized against other human service or operational needs. The proposed budget includes \$50,000 for a Human Services Strategic Plan which we expect will explore priorities related to the types of investments that will be most beneficial to the City's youth. We anticipate that plan will be completed by the end of 2023 and would be used to guide the City's Human Services funding decisions.