



Green New Deal Oversight Board



2024 Endorsed Budget Recommendations



Seattle
Office of Sustainability
& Environment



City of Seattle

Date: June 8, 2023

To: Mayor Bruce Harrell, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Lewis, Councilmember Morales, Councilmember Mosqueda, Councilmember Nelson, Councilmember Pederson, Councilmember Sawant, Councilmember Strauss

From: The Green New Deal Oversight Board

cc: Director Jessyn Farrell, Director Julie Dingley, Climate Justice Director Lylianna Allala, Fiscal and Policy Manager Saroja Reddy, Policy Analyst Yolanda Ho, Fiscal and Policy Analyst Akshay Iyengar

Subject: 2024 Budget Recommendations to Advance a Green New Deal for Seattle

Honorable Mayor Harrell and Esteemed Council,

The Green New Deal Oversight Board (GND Board) is writing to submit our 2024 Budget Recommendations. Per Green New Deal (GND) Ordinance 125926, our Board's mission is to eliminate climate pollution in Seattle by 2030, advance frontline community resiliency and economic inclusion, and prioritize equity, social justice, and community-identified climate solutions. The GND Board does this by:

- Recommending systemic changes and budget priorities to the Mayor, City Council, City departments and advisory boards
- Supporting departmental planning and implementation
- Coordinating efforts with City departments and related advisory groups

In June 2022, the GND Board submitted our [2022-2023 Budget Recommendations](#). We were pleased that the majority of our recommendations were reflected in the Adopted Biennium Budget. The GND Board has already begun to see how a values-aligned budget can create transformational, positive change in frontline communities who are harmed first and worst by the climate crisis. The Payroll Expense Tax (PET) is the first revenue source that allows City government to explicitly address climate justice, reduce emissions, and advance community-led climate solutions. It is imperative the City maintain the dedicated revenue source for its legislated uses, all of which contribute to climate justice, as climate threats are expected to increase in frequency and intensity.

When the City prioritizes climate justice, it is also prioritizing racial and social justice. Frontline communities are already experiencing cumulative impacts from multiple climate stressors which continue to threaten and harm their health, livelihoods, and environments. Seattle's frontline communities include Black people, Indigenous people, sovereign tribal nations, communities of color, immigrants, refugees, youth, elders,

people who are unhoused, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, people with low and no income, and people who work in outdoor occupations. Including GND priorities in the 2024 Endorsed budget means:

- Supporting frontline communities with resources to prepare for and adapt to a changing climate
- Providing services for low-income households to transition from fossil fuels to more energy and cost-efficient solutions that are good for people and the planet
- Creating a budget that embodies our City's value of Racial and Social Justice

The GND Board is reinforcing our budget recommendations for this biennium which were shaped by GND Board community engagement and outreach efforts including a community listening session and survey, multiple presentations from City Departments focused on program areas in alignment with the GND, summarizing findings from community reports on local climate and environmental justice priorities, and decades of unique technical expertise, professional networks, and community relationships that each board member holds. As the City moves toward its next budget cycle, the GND Board plans to conduct robust frontline community engagement and educational opportunities focused on the City's budget process. The GND Board continues to uphold our commitment to work directly with communities, many of whom already hold climate solutions, in order to maximize opportunities for climate and environmental justice throughout GND implementation.



GND Board's 2024 Endorsed Budget Recommendations

1. Advocate for and support the 2024 Endorsed Budget and maintain the Payroll Expense Tax (PET) revenue for its legislated uses, all of which support frontline community climate resilience.

- **Restrict funding reductions and changes to maintain the 2024 Endorsed Budget with the GND supported budget items.** We appreciate the Mayor's 2024 GND PET revenue budget outline and the Council's adoption of the 2024 Endorsed Budget.
- **Maintain the intended allocations for the PET Revenue, including the 9% allocation for Green New Deal implementation.** The GND Board also supports the other legislated allocations for the PET revenue which include 62% for housing, 15% for small businesses, and 9% for the Equitable Development Initiative. While the GND has access to 9% of the revenue, the other allocations also support reaching our City's climate goals through investing in frontline communities.
- **Avoid covering budget deficits with PET dollars.** The GND Board will continue to advocate for the City staying focused on the climate crisis, which if not prioritized, will exacerbate other racial, economic, housing, health, and environmental crises. Furthermore, we appreciate the City's response to the 2022 budget shortfall by convening the Revenue Stabilization Workgroup to identify strategies to solve the City's revenue challenges. Maintaining the integrity of the PET revenue is in alignment with City's values of Racial Equity and Social Justice, and honors contributing employers.

2. City budget decisions should be in service of climate and environmental justice which includes economic inclusion and access to livable wage jobs, climate resiliency, and building capacity for the GND implementation.

- **All City Departments should utilize the GND as a framework for citywide policies, projects, programs, and budgeting.** The following three pillars are a guide for aligning with the GND:
 - Address the climate crisis and environmental injustice through carbon pollution reduction and climate adaptation efforts
 - Build an inclusive and equitable low carbon economy
 - Promote community health and well-being by investing deeply in frontline communities¹ who include Black, Indigenous and people of color communities, immigrant and refugee communities, and low-income communities to reduce climate-related health inequities and foster community resilience

¹All levels of government recognize that a variety of factors contribute to creating socially and environmentally vulnerable conditions for frontline communities amid the climate crisis. The EPA completed an in-depth study on [Climate Change and Social Vulnerability](#) in 2021, including a detailed [framework for assessing social vulnerability to climate change](#). The Washington State Healthy Environment for All Act defines "[vulnerable populations](#)" to guide state agencies' decision making to advance environmental justice by equitably distributing funding and environmental benefits across the state. The [City of Seattle's Climate Portal](#) also includes climate data that underscores the importance of prioritizing justice and equity as the City works to meet its climate goals.

- **City budget decisions should consider how municipal government is continuing to invest in fossil fuels through insurance, contracting, and other financial investments and expenditures** in order to meet the urgency of our climate goals, protect the public, respect Indigenous rights, and promote justice.

3. Host budget meeting(s) with the Mayor, City Budget Office, and GND Board Members prior to finalizing the Mayoral Budget.

- **Meeting with the GND Board will allow board members to provide further recommendations on reprioritizing funds during programmatic shifts and delays, and to use our community-based expertise to partner on how to continue investing in frontline communities even amid budget shortfalls.** The GND Board would welcome the opportunity to share our resources and knowledge and find other ways to collaborate to reflect frontline community needs throughout the City's budget.
- **Continued budget conversations with the Mayor's Office will be an opportunity to fulfill our commitment to building a relationship with you and your staff.** Together, we can propel proven climate solutions by providing other avenues for the GND Board to share information based on our deep community relationships and technical expertise. The GND Board is an asset to the City, and we are eager to collaborate with you as we collectively work to address the climate crisis.

We look forward to your response and discussing our recommendations further with you and your staff.

Respectfully,

Andrea Ornelas, Labor Union Representative

Debolina Banerjee, Environmental Justice Representative, **Co-Chair**

Dennis Comer, Environmental Justice Representative

Emily Myers, Labor Union Representative

Eunice How, Environmental Justice Representative

Jess Wallach, GHG Reduction & Climate Resiliency Representative

Ken Workman, Tribal Representative

Keith Weir, Labor Union Representative

Kristina Chu, Youth Representative

Maria Batayola, Frontline Representative

Matt Remle, Frontline Representative

Nina Olivier, GHG Reduction & Climate Resiliency Representative, **Executive Committee Member At-Large**

Peter Hasegawa, Labor Union Representative, **Co-Chair**

Rachel Heaton, Tribal Representative

Steve Gelb, Workforce Training Specialist

Tomas Madrigal, Frontline Representative

Key Definitions

Frontline Communities: The communities that experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks due to exposures, greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, or cumulative impacts from multiple stressors; these include Black people, Indigenous people, sovereign tribal nations, communities of color, immigrants, refugees, youths, elders, houseless people, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, people with low and no income, and people who work in outdoor occupations.

Focus Areas: The geographic areas, defined broadly by zip code or neighborhood, where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low-incomes, and limited-English proficiency tend to live, which are also areas highly impacted by socioeconomic and environmental challenges

Mission Statement

The Green New Deal Oversight Board connects frontline community-led voices and the Seattle city government to eliminate Seattle's climate pollution by 2030, while resolving racial, social, and economic inequities. We do this by:

1. Recommending systemic changes and budget priorities to the Mayor, City Council, City departments and advisory boards
2. Supporting departmental planning and implementation
3. Coordinating efforts with City departments and related advisory groups pursuant to [Ordinance 125926](#).



Core Values

The Green New Deal Oversight Board adopted the following values which guide the way they enact their mission.

- We act with mindful urgency to accomplish our vision and mission.
- We listen to and are guided by frontline communities.
- We engage, consult, and obtain consent from impacted tribal nations. We practice having an open mind and cultural humility
- We seek to build trust and reliability with respectful, honest, caring, and transparent interactions within and outside the Green New Deal Oversight Board.
- We are guided by accurate information, science, and community experience and insight.
- We seek to creatively solve problems and conflict by addressing the root causes and will not accept false solutions that continue extractive practices and/or prioritizes profits over communities.





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