

Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board (CAB)

MEETING SUMMARY	Date: April 24, 2025 Time: 9am – 11am Location: Virtual (MS Teams)
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Barbara Baquero (Food Access, #2), Nurhazila Mohamath (Food Access, #3), Tanika Thompson Bird (Community, #5), Angie S. Wood (Public Health, #6), Yamila Sterling (Public Health, #7), Jen Moss (Public Health, #8), Dan Torres (Early Learning, #10), Laura Nicholson (Early Learning, #11)
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Joey Lu (Food Access, #1)
VACANT SEATS:	Community Representative, Position #4 Public Health, Position #9
GUESTS:	Bridget Igoe, Office of Sustainability & Environment Hannah Pascual, Office of Sustainability & Environment Robyn Kumar, Office of Sustainability & Environment Akshay Iyengar, City Budget Office Sean Walsh, Human Services Department Lisa Uemoto, Department of Neighborhoods
VOTES AND DECISIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSE staff will create outline of budget recommendation feedback and approach from today's meeting • CAB will discuss budget recommendations further at the May 22nd meeting

Welcome and Introductions

T. Thompson Bird, CAB Co-Chair, opened the meeting, facilitated introductions, and reviewed the agenda.

CAB's Role in Budget Process Overview

- Bridget provided overviews of the City budget process and the CAB process timeline [Access presentation slides here.](#)
 - City budget process: Established an understanding of what is expected of the Mayor's Office, City Council, the City Budget Office, and other City departments when it comes to adopting the City budget on a bi-annual basis.
 - CAB process timeline: The CAB will follow their own timeline of anticipated topics for their monthly meetings and additional follow-up to prepare their recommendations to align effectively with the City budget process.
 - April
 - City Budget Office will share information for the CAB to keep in mind and have the opportunity to dig deeper into City information.

- Review of Sweetened Beverage Tax (SBT) investments, current budget, and April revenue forecast
- Discuss how the CAB would like to proceed on recommendations
- May
 - Determine budget recommendations
 - Review/discuss additional information for consideration
 - Draft budget recommendations
 - Transmit recommendations to Mayor (w/ CAB approval)
- June:
 - Utilize monthly meeting to finalize details and complete additional work (if needed)

April Revenue Update

- Akshay provided background on the City Budget Office’s work and their role/focus during the City budget process. [Access presentation slides here.](#)
- City Budget Office (CBO) Basics Overview:
 - The City budget process runs on a biannual basis and is formally amended every two years; City legislation requires a balanced budget to be approved on this basis.
 - Proposed budgets are based on economic forecasts, which is then used to make adjustments to create a balanced budget
 - The budget governs appropriation levels for all City departments
- Expenditures for departments are organized by within different “buckets” of funding
 - General Fund (GF): The most flexible funding source that is supplemented by the JumpStart/Payroll tax.
 - 2026 adopted budget: \$8.1 out of \$9.0 billion total funds is discretionary
- The April revenue update and a current snapshot of the SBT fund was provided. Notes that:
 - GF is sticking to the status quo
 - Broader economic factors may still need to be taken into consideration (ex. War in Iran)
 - The SBT is its own separate fund, and that while 2026 and 2027 is okay, it is expected it to go out of balance in 2028
 - This is a long-term challenge: CAB’s recommendations are highly welcomed to navigate this situation.
 - Directed by City Council, the City will have to present a balanced budget through 2030
- Questions/Comments:
 - Barbara: With the World Cup coming to Seattle, should we be hopeful or expecting a spike in the SBT fund due to increased drink consumption?
 - Akshay: Believes this to be the case but will need to check with proper sources to confirm. Notes this is difficult to forecast as data is based on tracking sales tax, and not actual consumption.
 - Bridget: Added that the SBT Fund forecast uses rather “blunt instruments” based on income and employment data, not consumption data. Annual data on tax filings on sugary drinks is not available until April of the following tax year.
 - Yamila: Noted that she would like to know more about what is happening in the City to influence sales and understand how something in the environment would impact spikes

- in sales (e.g Superbowl, Mariners, FIFA). Would like to also understand why forecast is based on just income and employment.
- Akshay: Can see if spikes from past events can correlate with increases in funds to determine a way to predict additional forecast.
 - Bridget: Regarding the data being based on income and employment, that is what the City uses to forecast GF. Detail consumption data is not readily available to the City. Seasonality trends can be seen in the data retrospectively, based on distributors' quarterly tax filing reports.
- Bridget: Considering the planning for the next six years, are cuts being considered in SBT funding? Understands that information may not be available at this time.
 - Akshay: Confirms that he is not able to comment on this question now, but notes that they are working things out internally. Mentions that while the SBT is a priority, but the broader issue is that general fund is expecting a shortfall and needs to be accounted for.
 - Barbara: Reflected that SBT/CAB has come a long way from when they started and is hopeful to continue in the direction of improvement. Expressed curiosity at who else is being invited in these meetings. If Council is making these decisions, who is joining them? Emphasized the need to have these additional perspectives, especially for long term planning. Also, adds that they should consider what they need to do with Fresh Bucks so that the 4,000+ people can remain in the program.
 - Bridget: Noted that this meeting and the May meeting will be a critical time to decide on how CAB will want to approach their recommendations. Outreach to policy leads and departments can occur after CAB action on budget recommendations is determined.
 - Akshay: Recognized that funding is a good point, and his understanding is that except for DON's Food Equity Fund, all the other food programs have a mix of SBT Fund and GF. For Fresh Bucks, this is an active conversation and is mostly GF this year. However, CBO is looking at food for investments in their recommendations.
 - Dan: Is DEEL programming moving to the Family Education Preschool and Prep (FEPP) Levy, specifically 4108 Expenditure?
 - Akshay: Believes that funds are being carried forward from the 0-3 program and C-Cap funding, or other DEEL funds that are still being spent down.

CAB Discussion on Budget Recommendations

- Bridget provided information on what the current program budgets looks like for the SBT Fund, noting some of the 2026 fund swaps between SBT and the FEPP Levy (in the case of DEEL's early learning programs) and between SBT and GF (in the case of HSD's food programs). [Access presentation slides here.](#)
 - Provided overview of other funding in 2026 Adopted Budget for food and early learning
 - HSD Food and Nutrition Budget: \$6M more from last budget cycle in recognition of increased need.
 - Additional \$/investments are one-time
 - Food Banks: Purely SBT funds, not GF

- GF is equally if not more volatile due to structural issues in funding sources (ex. one-time investments)
 - Fresh Bucks: ~\$12M total – about half is due to ongoing investments from SBT and GF funds
 - Detailed other New Food Access Investments that are not SBT funding and are one-time investments
 - FEPP Levy
 - Provided statistics and information about demand of food assistance (see slides for details)
 - Questions/Comments:
 - Dan: Are these one-time bumps in food assistance in relation to federal cut? Why is it only one-year?
 - Bridget: My sense is the last administration was using a wait-and-see tactic to address immediate, short-term need and then see how the volatile federal situation pans out.
 - Sean: Added that \$12M investment is from Mayor Harrell, which is a different administration. The other \$12M is from City Council – which is continuing funding.
 - Angie: Reflected on her work and that the City contract pays for regular food bank visits and delivery – but does not provide to unhoused/unstably housed. Emphasizes there needs to be programs to support this and believes that they need to show support for sustainable, long-term funding for essential services.
 - Bridget: Referred to information regarding food banks in 2026 adopted and noted how the one-time investments went to specific organizations, which could include this. Agreed that that it is good to note this for future consideration.
 - Laura: For Fresh Bucks, are those on the waitlist considered approved or eligible already?
 - Bridget: Yes.
- CAB Discussion/Activity
 - Bridget discussed goals, discussion flow, and prompted folks to ground themselves in values
 - CAB Values and Budget Principles: CAB participated in an activity on Canva to help center themselves and provide foundation for what will go into the budget recommendation memo. [Access to Canva activity here.](#)
 - Approaches to Budget Recommendations
 - Bridget provided a reminder of how discussion was done in the past and notes that SBT is now a mature fund
 - Provided underlying assumptions with each suggested approach
 - Discussion:
 - Dan: Agrees with using existing guidance is a good approach – especially in a balanced scenario with statements about specific situations that come up.
 - Yamila: Agrees to continue the course to approach a balanced budget scenario but wants to consider the strategy to ensure money is going to food banks if it is part of SBT and not part of the general funding. Considers where they can find funding elsewhere for food banks which would allow SBT funding to be used for other programs. Asks what CAB

recommendations can do to find a source or funding that actually supports food banks that remains stable.

- Bridget: Is the suggestion that you want to revisit and tackle the 2026 “no supplantation” issue?
- Yamila: Acknowledges that this might be a risk but would like to bring it back to original intention of SBT funds.
- Bridget: Asked what other CAB members think about this approach.
- Dan: Suggested untangling the SBT-GF funding swaps over time to get the CAB or SBT funding to what it was originally intended to do.
- Laura (note from Teams): “The 0-3 cuts are concerning from a short term and long-term perspective--investments are fantastic in early learning, but if families can't live in seattle when their babies are born, then the need for more affordable slots is not going to be needed when those kids turn 3”
 - Bridget: So, it sounds like you would like to look back into the 0-3 program?
 - Barbara + Tanika voice their agreement to Laura and Bridget’s statements
- Barbara: Agrees with balanced approach to articulate the strategies of how to stay the course. However, if things change (e.g. deficit), they need to consider that in recommendations and take a stance on it ahead of time.
- Angie: Would like to add something that isn’t just about funding programs, but to be a voice to the community. Supports the belief that services such as food banks are seen as essential and notes changing the funding from a secure source (GF) takes that away. Believes the CAB should vocalize the distinction for consideration.
 - Dan/Tanika/Barbara/Bridget: Voiced agreement or recognition on this statement.
- Bridget: For one-time funding such as the one-time bumps for food banks and ongoing programs, are there recommendations on what to do and how?
 - Tanika: Acknowledged that it’s scary because the money can just go away, especially with no plan to make it sustained. Suggestion to add to recommendations if CAB agrees.
 - Angie: Posed to address specific point in time due to volatility. Adds that the City is not paying for services already as a small proportion of that money that is used to run programs. Supports getting funding from City helps regardless of what is happening at federal level.
 - Yamila: One time funding is helpful in addressing what Angie mentioned earlier.

Wrap-up and Next Steps

- Bridget proposed that she and Hannah will take these notes and start to build outline based on what was said. Then they will share the draft outline with the Executive Committee for review before sending to full CAB. Working on the outline and draft memo will be the focus of the May meeting.
 - CAB is in agreement.
- In the meantime, until May: OSE will follow-up on information needs and suggested that CAB put in Canva additional asks/information.

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