

Capital Improvement Program

Overview

Capital Improvement Program Purpose

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year financial planning tool that identifies future capital investments and potential strategies for funding those investments. The CIP also satisfies various requirements of cities planning under the Growth Management Act.

Background

The City of Seattle owns and operates a variety of physical assets, ranging from community parks, roadways, bridges, office buildings, libraries, open space, fire stations, maintenance yards, facilities at Seattle Center, and more. The City must properly maintain these assets in order to ensure they are safe, lasting, and provide a welcoming and usable space to serve their intended purposes. The City's utility infrastructure is also included in the CIP, including electric, solid waste, water and wastewater utility assets. The City's capital infrastructure supports City operations, direct public services and programs, and in some cases, provides direct public benefits themselves.

Every year during the annual budget process, the City adopts a six-year CIP, which outlines anticipated investments over that timeframe. The 2020-2025 Proposed CIP totals \$7.2 billion over six years, with approximately \$1.4 billion of that amount designated for the 2020 budget year.

Capital Planning Policies

The City has historically based capital planning efforts on a set of criteria that help set priorities among potential capital programs. [Resolution 31203](#), adopted in June 2010, set out the following policies to guide the City's capital spending:

- preserve and maintain existing capital assets;
- support the goals of the City's plans;
- support economic development;
- consider external funding possibilities;
- consider revenue-generating possibilities;
- seek regional funding for regional projects;
- pursue cost-saving commitments; and,
- pursue conservation and sustainability investments.

Additional specific considerations include:

- compliance with regulatory requirements;
- coordination between departments and with other jurisdictions; and
- public safety and health.

Capital Subcabinet

The Capital Subcabinet is one of several subcabinets established by Mayor Durkan. The Subcabinet's function is to serve as a coordinated decision-making body whose goal is to guide the planning and implementation of infrastructure investments and address related non-infrastructure issues to ensure that the City delivers high-quality capital projects on scope, schedule and budget. The Directors of the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and the City Budget Office (CBO) co-chair the Capital Subcabinet. Membership is comprised of directors from key capital departments as well as other

non-capital departments who focus on outreach, economic, environmental, and race and social justice issues. Member departments include Seattle City Light (SCL), Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Office of Economic Development (OED), Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and Office of Housing (OH). It also includes participation by other departments to address environmental and race and social justice issues.

Project Cost Estimate Review and Validation Process

The 2020-2025 Proposed CIP includes two projects that implement a new approach to early cost estimating: Northlake Retaining Wall (SDOT) and Elevator Rehabilitation and Replacement (FAS). The process was developed in 2019 through the work of the Capital Subcabinet. This is a new approach to budgeting projects in early stages of development and will provide Council and the public with a better understanding of the unknowns associated with each of the project.

The key elements to the process are:

- Discrete projects with an initial rough order of magnitude total project cost estimate over \$10 million will communicate a range of possible costs in the CIP rather than an exact dollar estimate.
- Departments will appropriate the estimated cost to reach 100% design and communicate a midrange “Financial Planning Estimate” for six-year financial planning purposes.
- At the 30% design milestone, the project will be baselined and a total project cost and project schedule will be agreed to. During the next budget cycle (or other Council action) the department will budget the full total project cost in the CIP.
- If the baseline total project cost estimate is under \$50 million the project will proceed through capital project delivery process according to current practice.
- If the 30% baseline total project cost is over \$50 million, the department will initiate a third-party review of the project cost. The department will bring the results of the third-party cost estimate review to the Capital Subcabinet to determine the next steps.

The Cost Estimate Review and Validation process will be adjusted according to the results of the pilot projects.

Capital Program Funding

Like all large municipalities, Seattle relies on a variety of sources to pay for capital projects. These include locally generated revenues (taxes, fees, voter-approved levies, and user fees), intergovernmental revenues (including state and federal grants), private funding (franchise utilities, philanthropy) and debt issuance. These traditional sources continue to provide the majority of funding for capital facility investments. The City’s level of capital investment is based on the mix and amount of financial resources available to the City.

Debt Financing

The City uses multiple forms of debt to finance large capital projects such as Limited Tax General Obligation Bonds (LTGO) also known as councilmanic bonds, Unlimited Tax General Obligation Bonds (UTGO) or voter-approved bonds, and revenue bonds. Unlike pay-as-you-go sources of funding, the issuance of debt requires revenues in future years to repay the principal and interest expenses. Councilmanic debt is a common financing tool used by the City, but those obligations must be repaid

from the same set of limited resources including Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), commercial parking tax (CPT) and General Fund revenues. See the “City Bond Issuance and Debt Service” in the Introduction section of the 2020 Proposed Budget for more information on debt financing.

Public Utility Funding

Both Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities fund utility projects with revenues from utility rates. Each utility has adopted financial policies that determine what share of their capital investments are funded through cash, and what share from debt. These policies are designed to balance the portion of current investments that are paid by today’s ratepayers, versus future ratepayers who will also benefit from long-term capital investments.

Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)

Funding of the City’s general government capital program is highly dependent on revenue from REET. REET is a volatile revenue source that tracks closely to local economic activity. An active residential market combined with continued strength in commercial activity has led to robust REET revenues over the past several years.

Although REET revenues in recent years have been following a relatively stable trend, large and sudden fluctuations in this revenue source make it difficult to depend upon for ongoing capital needs. The current REET forecast shows continued growth in 2019 but leveling off in 2020 which may be an indicator of a pending decline. For this precise reason, the City maintains a reserve of REET funds to help offset fluctuations in revenue. The City dipped into this reserve in 2010, but through careful management of capital spending, the City was able to replenish the \$10 million target reserve level by the end of 2014. Maintaining this reserve is critical to ensure the City has sufficient funding to support core asset preservation work in the event of a future economic downturn.

Taking advantage of a state law change in 2019 ([HB 1219](#)), the Mayor’s 2020 Proposed budget will dedicate a portion of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues to support additional capital investments in new affordable housing. Starting in 2021, the City will provide \$5 million per year for a total of \$25 million over five years for this effort. Per City policy, REET revenues are generally targeted toward spending on the long-term maintenance of City facilities. While additional funding for affordable housing is clear a priority for the City, ongoing investments in our existing facilities is necessary to support the provision of other City services and to avoid costly projects that result from the neglect and deferred maintenance. The budget strikes a balance between these competing uses of REET revenues.

Seattle’s Recent History – Major Voter-Approved Levies and Capital Projects

In addition to reliance upon general tax sources, Seattle undertook several major capital projects during the last two decades using voter-approved funds and councilmanic debt. Voter-approved capital projects include improvements to Seattle Center and construction of new or expanded community centers and parks, new or remodeled downtown and branch libraries, new or remodeled fire facilities, parks improvements, and replacement of the Elliott Bay Seawall. The following is a list recent levies that are still actively funding projects:

- *The Move Seattle Transportation Levy:* The Move Seattle Levy, a nine-year \$930 million levy was approved by voters in 2015. The proposed budget appropriates \$140 million in 2020. Levy proceeds will be used to support safe routes, congestion relief, and maintenance and repairs of the City’s bridges and arterial roadways. A major financing strategy in the Move Seattle Levy is

the dependence on partnerships—leveraging external resources such as state and federal grants to accomplish transportation projects such as the S. Lander Street Grade Separation project.

- *Seattle Park District:* The passage of the Park District is the culmination of the Parks Legacy Plan project, led by the Parks Legacy Plan Citizens' Advisory Committee. The goal of the Park District is to provide long term, stable funding to support recreation programming, parks projects and the critical needs for investment in major and ongoing maintenance. In 2016, the Parks District began collecting property tax revenue, accumulating the first year of full funding for Park District projects. The Park District will provide over \$25 million in 2020 for major maintenance and capital projects.
- *The 2012 Central Seawall Excess Levy:* A 30-year, \$290 million bond levy provided a portion of the funding needed to construct Phase 1 of the Elliott Bay Seawall Project (from Washington Street to Virginia Street) and funds reconstruction of one of the public piers (Pier 62/63 and Waterfront Park). The final elements of the Seawall project will be complete in late 2019 or early 2020 as part of the Pier 62/63 replacement project.
- *The 2019 Library Levy:* A seven-year, \$123 million levy to support, maintain and improve core Library services. Included as part of the levy were resources for the preservation and maintenance of library facilities. The City Librarian and the Library Board of Trustees prepare annual progress reports that show how levy proceeds have been used each year. The levy provides an average of \$3.1 million annually for major maintenance and asset preservation projects; including maintenance necessary for building components such as roofs, floors, finishes, HVAC and mechanical systems. The levy also includes funding for earthquake retrofits at three Carnegie branches.
- *The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy:* A six-year, \$146 million levy to acquire, develop, or restore, existing or new, parks, recreation facilities, cultural facilities, green spaces, playfields, trails, community gardens, and shoreline areas. This levy expired at the end of 2014, but a new source of voter-approved revenue—the Seattle Park District—is now providing on-going funding to help address major maintenance needs, as well as park development, at the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks). As of the beginning of 2019, the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy Fund carried a balance of \$17 million. Parks will continue to spend down existing budget authority on project identified in the Levy throughout the biennium.

Funding Dynamics for Significant Future Capital Projects

Given general resource funding challenges, the City will continue to rely on mix of general government resources and voter-approved funding packages to complete major capital projects and to secure needed funding for basic asset preservation. The City has identified several major priority areas for which significant capital investments will be needed. The following sections describe these priority areas at a high level.

Public Safety Facilities

Planning for the future of Seattle's public safety facilities is critical to maintaining the high level of service expected of Seattle Fire Department (SFD) and Seattle Police Department (SPD). Both departments have a number of large capital facility needs, such as a new Fire Station Headquarters and neighborhood precinct projects that will accommodate anticipated police staffing growth. In addition to

maintenance and renovation work at existing facilities this CIP provides funding for a larger project to support more comprehensive improvements to facility needs in north Seattle. In addition to these investments there are ongoing maintenance projects, including work at Fire Station 31, which are essential to ensure the ongoing operations of both SFD and SPD.

Transportation

The City's existing transportation network faces an extensive backlog of major maintenance. Current funding is insufficient to maintain the City's road, bridges, signs, etc. In addition, through a series of long-term planning efforts the City has completed "Master Plans" that identify large potential investments in a transit network, bicycle facilities, freight projects and pedestrian-oriented infrastructure. The \$930 million Move Seattle Levy will address critical transportation programs such as safe routes, relief of congested roadways and maintenance and repair programs.

Waterfront

The City has developed a comprehensive plan for the improvement of Seattle's central waterfront. The removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct provides an opportunity to reconnect the City to the waterfront and develop new open space to support the growth and economic development of central Seattle. There are five main capital projects encompassed in the Waterfront program for a total of \$726 million (not including utility costs).

Projects

The largest project—the Alaskan Way Main Corridor project—will construct a new surface street and an adjoining pedestrian promenade, providing access to the waterfront from Pioneer Square to Belltown. The Overlook Walk and East-West Connections project constructs the Overlook Walk, a new accessible connection between the Pike Place Market and the waterfront, and improvements to east-west streets connecting the waterfront and the rest of downtown Seattle. The program also includes projects to reconstruct parks located on piers along the waterfront (Waterfront Park and Pier 62/63 Park), expand the Seattle Aquarium and expand the Pike Place Market.

Funding

The 2020-2025 Proposed CIP identifies a mix of resources to fund these projects and other elements of the overall Waterfront redevelopment. In addition to general government resources in the form of REET, commercial parking tax, and general fund-supported debt, the funding plan calls for significant contributions from a Local Improvement District (LID), philanthropy, and WSDOT. The LID provides that property owners who benefit from the project pay a share of its cost. LID formation was approved in 2019 and will provide \$160 million of funding for the waterfront improvements.

Protecting and Creating Opportunities for Workers

The City considers not only what capital projects to fund, but also how to deliver them and achieve broader goals for fairness, equity and opportunity in the community. The Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) leads several policy initiatives to ensure social responsibility and equity in the spending of City capital dollars.

Fair and equitable treatment of workers: FAS monitors and enforces fair and equitable treatment of workers in City construction contracts. In 2013, FAS increased its monitoring and enforcement of wage and labor conditions on City-contracted construction projects, including Office of Housing-financed

projects. The 2019 Adopted Budget provided funding to allow FAS to continue this program, including compliance monitoring for wage and labor violations for projects considered high-risk. It also includes funding to support the Acceptable Worksite program, which trains, teaches and enforces anti-harassment and anti-bullying interventions on City-funded construction projects.

Reduce barriers to construction jobs: The City's own spending on major capital investments can help drive employment within the local economy. Construction jobs and related positions offer living-wage jobs that can support individuals and families. The City's Priority Hire program provides training and opportunities for City residents to work on City-funded capital projects. For major capital projects, City contractors enter into Community Workforce Agreements that are intended to increase employment for women, people of color and those living in economically distressed areas of the City.

Women and Minority Owned Business (WMBE): The City continues to successfully address contracting equity for minority- and women- owned businesses. In 2011, FAS implemented a Citywide requirement on all public work bids and contracts above \$300,000 called the "Public Works WMBE Inclusion Plan" that continues to effectively encourage and enforce commitments by contractors to use WMBE firms. In 2014, FAS launched prompt pay initiatives which our WMBE firms report as very significant and meaningful for their business cash flow. The 2020 Proposed Budget maintains funding added in the 2019 Adopted Budget for FAS to procure technical assistance services for firms interested in doing business with the City, specifically requiring the selected organization to focus assistance to WMBE firms. The objective is to provide WMBE firms with business and technical guidance that helps them compete more successfully for public projects, including better equipping them to participate on Priority Hire projects.

2020-2025 Proposed Capital Improvement Program Summary

The 2020-2025 Proposed CIP totals \$7.2 billion for six years and includes approximately 532 projects¹. Approximately \$4.5 billion of the six-year total, or 62%, are utility projects managed by Seattle City Light (SCL) and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and mostly funded by utility rates. The Seattle Department of Transportation's CIP totals \$1.86 billion (26%) over the six-year period, while the remaining departments (Parks and Recreation, Finance and Administrative Services, Seattle Center, Seattle Public Library, and Seattle Information Technology Department) account for approximately \$899 million, or 12%, of the six-year CIP.

¹ The project total includes all projects with a CIP Project Page in the 2020-2025 Proposed CIP.

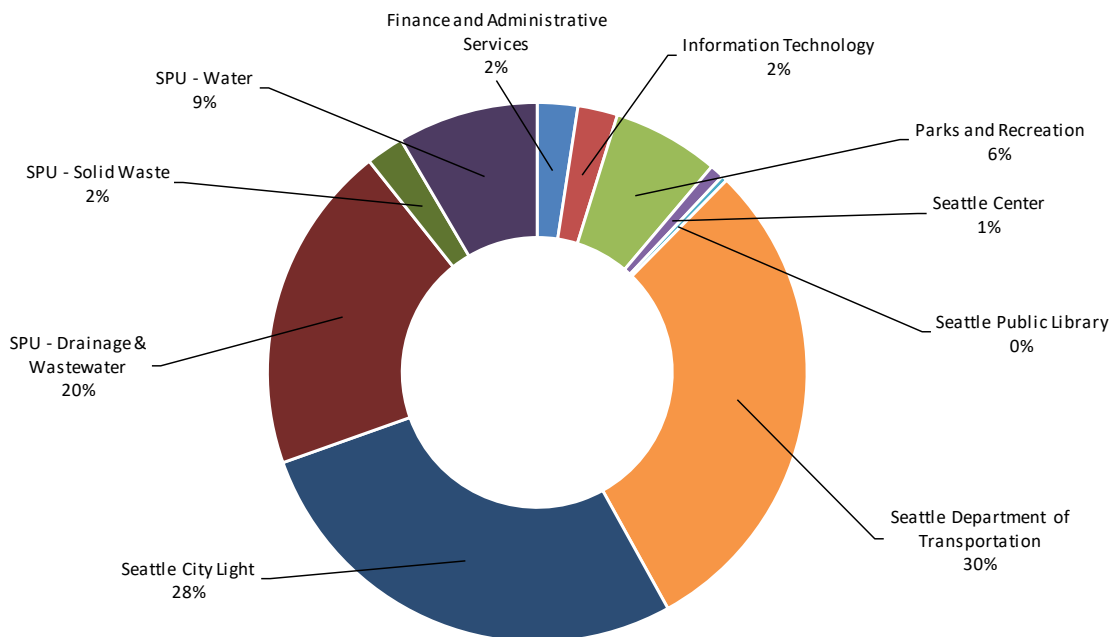
2020-2025 Proposed CIP by Department (000s)

Department	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed	2021-2025 Estimate	2020-2025 Total
Finance and Admin Services	35,355	34,586	33,129	179,791	212,919
Information Technology	36,982	34,354	32,734	79,195	111,928
Parks and Recreation	74,631	82,500	87,308	381,893	469,202
Seattle Center	13,429	11,059	11,585	52,012	63,597
Seattle Public Library	3,221	578	4,768	36,304	41,072
Seattle Dept of Transportation	344,283	406,274	404,626	1,452,839	1,857,465
Subtotal	507,901	569,351	574,149	2,182,034	2,756,183
City-owned Utilities					
Seattle City Light	351,394	368,210	378,049	1,869,315	2,247,364
SPU - Drainage & Wastewater	229,472	305,983	270,026	1,180,922	1,450,949
SPU - Solid Waste	6,432	24,894	30,859	63,648	94,507
SPU - Water	111,452	97,933	115,527	567,280	682,807
SPU- Technology*	12,873	11,200			
Subtotal	711,623	808,220	794,461	3,681,166	4,475,627
City Total	1,219,525	1,377,571	1,368,611	5,863,199	7,231,810

Note: 2019 Adopted totals are based on the 2019-2024 Adopted CIP. Not all funds above are appropriated; see the 2020 Proposed Budget for a list of capital appropriations by department.

*SPU – Technology projects are now included in 2020-2025 Proposed totals for three SPU funds.

2020 Proposed by Department - \$1,369 Million



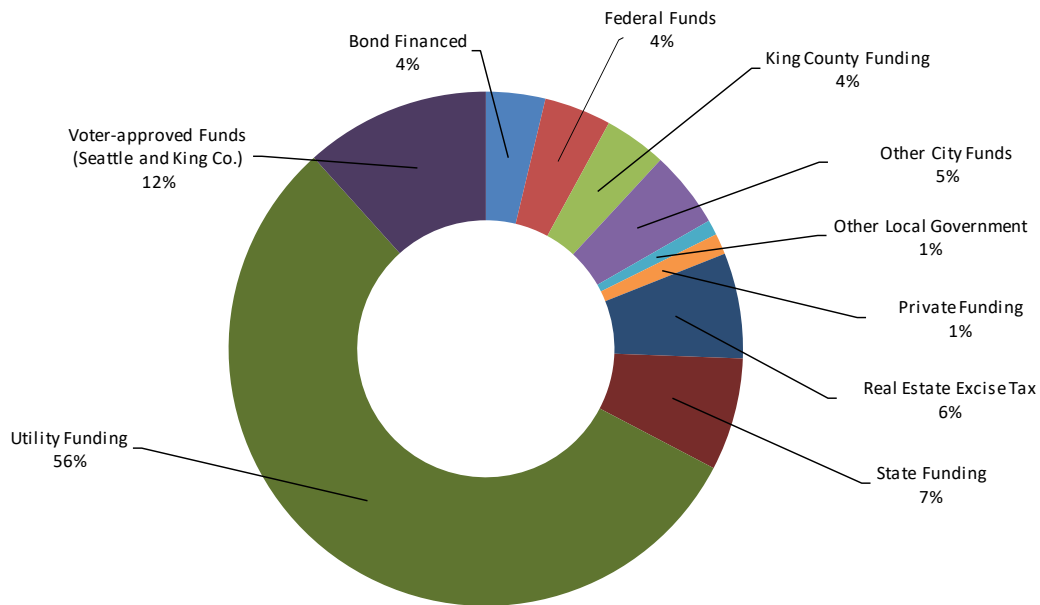
2020-2025 Proposed Capital Improvement Program

The table below identifies funding sources for the 2020-2025 Proposed CIP by Revenue Source Group

2020-2025 Proposed CIP Revenues (000s)

Revenue Source Group	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed	2021-2025 Estimated
Bond Financed	48,106	86,642	51,063	207,127
Federal Funds	34,791	64,310	57,634	69,423
King County Funding	19,548	39,529	53,850	138,106
Other City Funds	79,973	51,763	66,100	259,487
Other Local Government	10,253	5,569	12,975	24,903
Private Funding	6,689	23,327	17,965	116,147
Real Estate Excise Tax	84,131	86,051	90,815	404,397
State Funding	59,540	92,962	96,943	92,090
Utility Funding	709,294	789,475	761,700	3,623,274
Voter-approved Funds (Seattle and King Co.)	167,200	137,943	159,567	559,455
To Be Determined		-	-	368,789
Grand Total	1,219,525	1,377,571	1,368,611	5,863,199

2020 Proposed CIP by Revenue Source - \$1,369 million



Asset Preservation

A 2002 Asset Preservation Study found that, despite achieving targets recommended by the 1994 Citizens’ Capital Investment Committee, the City still lagged behind industry-recommended levels of investment in asset preservation. The four general government departments involved in the study (Finance and Administrative Services, Library, Parks and Recreation, and Seattle Center) are responsible

Overview

for approximately 6.9 million square feet of building space, 2.6 million square feet of parking space, and 240 million square feet of grounds (primarily green space) and work yards. These assets have a replacement value of approximately \$5 billion. Assuming an annual asset preservation funding target of 1.0% of the replacement value for buildings and 0.5% of the replacement value for other assets, the City should be investing about \$58 million per year in asset preservation. These percentage targets are consistent with those used by other jurisdictions that were polled as part of this study's review of best practices.

For 2020, the City will spend a total of \$55 million from the two Real Estate Excise Tax Funds and an additional \$45 million from various other resources on asset preservation for general government infrastructure in parks, libraries, civic buildings, and on the Seattle Center campus. Space rent charges continue to fund projects in the Department of Finance and Administrative Services as recommended by the 2002 Asset Preservation Study. The Department of Transportation will spend an additional \$11 million of REET resources and \$104 million of other transportation resources on infrastructure asset preservation during the 2020 budget period.

Cumulative Reserve Fund

The Cumulative Reserve Fund (CRF) is a significant source of ongoing local funding to support capital projects in general government departments. Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) supports the majority of CRF spending.

The table below shows department allocations from CRF along with other special programs, including debt service payments, support for the Design Commission, and the City's Tenant Relocation Assistance Program. Further explanations of these special programs can be found in the 2020 Proposed Budget.

CRF Appropriations by Department (000s)

Department (in Thousands)	2019 Adopted	2020 Endorsed	2020 Proposed
Seattle Center	11,572	9,489	10,015
Seattle Department of Transportation	19,650	17,345	19,345
Seattle Public Library	562	578	578
Department of Parks and Recreation	30,595	44,217	45,162
Finance & Administrative Services	22,516	14,616	16,158
Office of Planning and Community Development	546	540	1,071
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection	493	492	502
Human Services Department	-	-	1,500
Finance General *	5,157	4,631	7,181
Total	\$ 91,091	\$ 91,908	\$ 101,511

* Not all REET is appropriated out of the CIP

**Represents debt service on capital projects and funding for anticipated projects not yet reflected in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Neighborhood Projects

As the City adapts to the impacts of unprecedented growth, and plans for yet further development, a focus on the livability of neighborhoods is essential. The 2020-2025 Proposed CIP reflects this focus, and as highlighted below, supports neighborhood-scale capital investments in several different ways.

Neighborhood Parks and Street Fund – Your Voice, Your Choice

Beginning in 1999, the City set aside approximately \$1 million per year from the Cumulative Reserve Fund (CRF) for major maintenance projects identified through neighborhood outreach. That amount was increased to \$2 million of CRF resources in 2017 as part of the City’s commitment to neighborhoods. These neighborhood projects are identified and prioritized through participatory budgeting—a new process called “Your Voice, Your Choice” initiated by the Department of Neighborhoods in 2017. The project selection process was still ongoing at the time the 2020 budget was developed. Once the selection process is completed a list of selected projects can be found on the [Your Voice, Your Choice](#) website.

Neighborhood Matching Fund

The 2020 Proposed Budget maintains funding to [Neighborhood Matching Fund](#) (NMF) grant programs. A number of CIP projects, particularly in the Department of Parks and Recreation, include funding from NMF.

The City created the NMF in 1988 to provide funding to Seattle neighborhood groups and organizations for a broad array of neighborhood-initiated improvement, organizing, or planning projects. Many of these projects also support citywide initiatives such as Race and Social Justice, Youth Violence Prevention, Environment and Sustainability, and Neighborhood Planning. Awards range from a few thousand dollars (Small Sparks projects are up to \$5,000, and the Community Partnership Fund projects range from \$5,001 to \$25,000), and NMF funds can cover all phases of a capital project except property acquisition. The NMF program requires a 1:2 match for capital projects, which means all awards leverage other private and public contributions. Matches consist of volunteer labor, donated materials, professional services, or money. The Department of Neighborhoods administers the granting process.

Art and Design Funding for City Capital Projects - 1% for Art Program The 1% for Art program, established by Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 20.32, requires the City deposit 1% of eligible CIP project budgets in the Municipal Arts Fund for the commission, purchase and installation of artworks throughout Seattle. The Office of Arts and Culture (ARTS) manages the 1% for Art program and the Municipal Art Fund. ARTS establishes the scope of work and budgets for new art projects and describes the status of ongoing public art projects in an annual [Municipal Art Plan \(MAP\)](#).

Municipal Art Fund revenues from the 1% for Art program can fluctuate significantly from year-to-year depending on changes in City capital investments. In 2020, the Municipal Art Fund is expected to receive approximately \$4.9 million from capital departments for the 1% for Art program, as described below. Actual 2020 receipts may vary because of project timing, City Council changes to the proposed CIP, expenditures, and prior year credits.

1% for Art Revenues (Estimated)	2020 Proposed
City Light	\$573,000
Seattle Public Utilities	\$1,993,000
Seattle Center	\$9,000
Parks & Recreation	\$157,000
Transportation	\$2,158,000
Total	\$4,890,000

Design Commission

Established in 1968, the [Seattle Design Commission](#) advises the Mayor, the City Council and appropriate City departments on design and environmental aspects of the City’s CIP. Commission members are appointed by the Mayor for a renewable two-year term. Membership is comprised of two licensed architects, one professional fine artist, one appointee from the Get Engaged program, one lay member, and at least one and no more than two from each of the following categories, for a maximum total of five: professional urban planner, professional environmental or urban designer, landscape architect, and licensed professional engineer. The Design Commission is fully funded with funds from the Cumulative Reserve Fund.

Projects eligible for review include any on-or above-grade structure, including buildings and additions to buildings, bridges, park developments, street furniture, and all similar installations. The Commission reviews below-grade structures such as tunnels, arcades and underground passageways that are regularly visible to the public. Projects reviewed by the Commission must be financed in-whole or in-part with City funds, be on land belonging to the City, or be subject to approval by the City. Commission involvement in capital improvement projects begins as early in the planning process as possible, starting with participation in the consultant selection process and continuing through the many stages of project development. This includes project reviews at the scope briefing or pre-design stage, conceptual design, schematic design, design development, and sometimes construction documents stages.

Background of Capital Improvement Program Policy Drivers

As described above, City investments in capital projects are guided by a set of key policies reflecting the City’s values and priorities. These policies shape how the City takes care of buildings and infrastructure, invests in capital projects in areas that have accepted growth as envisioned in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, preserves the City’s historic buildings, supports sustainable building practices, and ensures that all members of the community have access to the economic opportunities capital projects create. The following section details some of these key policies.

Sustainable Building Policy

In February 2000, the City Council adopted a Sustainable Building Policy for the City of Seattle ([Resolution 30121](#)) which articulated the City’s commitment to environmental, economic and social stewardship and set the expectation that new municipal facilities meet established green building standards. Specifically, it called for all new construction and major remodel projects over 5,000 square feet to achieve a LEED Silver rating. When adopted, this policy was the first of its kind in the nation and represented a groundbreaking approach to demonstrating City leadership and transforming the marketplace.

Since 2000, the green building community has experienced exceptional growth in expertise and capacity. Recognizing this change, in 2011 the City passed an updated Sustainable Building Policy ([Resolution 31326](#)). The update represents a comprehensive approach that reflects advances in the green building industry, aligns the policy with the City's increased attention to climate change, addresses a greater range of project types, and ensures that Seattle continues to provide leadership that advances sustainable development in both the public and private sectors. The updated policies include the following requirements.

- For new construction, additions and major renovation projects 5,000 square feet or greater
 - The minimum required green building rating is LEED Gold.
 - There are minimum requirements for energy and water efficiency, construction waste reductions, and bicycle amenities.
- For tenant improvement projects 5,000 square feet or greater, where the scope includes mechanical, electrical, and plumbing:
 - The minimum required green building rating is LEED Gold.
 - There are minimum requirements for water efficiency and construction waste reductions.
- Completion of a Capital Green checklist is required for projects smaller than 5,000 square feet or those otherwise not eligible for a LEED rating.
- City departments are encouraged to test new approaches and standards, such as the Living Building Challenge and the Sustainable Sites Initiative.
- Annual reporting of performance under the policy is required by March 31st of each year.

Additionally, the resolution directs City departments to evaluate and improve existing standards and processes that relate to tenant improvements, leasing, and site management.

City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision and roadmap for Seattle's future. The plan guides City decisions on where to build new jobs and houses, how to improve our transportation system, and where to make capital investments such as utilities, sidewalks, and libraries. The Plan is the framework for most of Seattle's big-picture decisions on how to grow while preserving and improving our neighborhoods. The update of the City's Comprehensive Plan "[Seattle 2035](#)" was passed by the City in October 2016. The City will begin an update to its Comprehensive Plan in 2020.

The Comprehensive Plan helped inform the development of the 2020-2025 Proposed CIP as departments have taken special note of capital projects in neighborhoods targeted for substantial growth in the future or that have received substantial growth in the last few years. This effort is intended to make sure areas receiving growth have the appropriate physical infrastructure to accommodate such growth, while balancing the major maintenance of existing facilities, such as power distribution systems, pipes, community centers, swimming pools, libraries, and streets that are located throughout the City, not just in targeted growth areas.

Federal and State Regulatory Requirements

The City's utilities have several facility projects in their Capital Improvement Programs to meet federal and state regulatory requirements. The City of Seattle must abide by the City's two National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, one for storm water and one for combined sewer

system. The City is required, for example, to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in the combined sewer/storm water system over the next several years to control the number of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into receiving bodies of water, including Lake Washington and Puget Sound. City Council recently approved a CSO Consent Decree with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Ecology (DOE). This Consent Decree outlines how the City will become compliant with EPA and DOE regulatory requirements regarding sewage releases from the city conveyance system.

City Light operates its hydroelectric dams and powerhouses under licenses from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Licenses include Settlement Agreements that require City Light to perform mitigation and public benefit activities. City Light is currently completing Skagit Mitigation; is well under way with Boundary Relicensing; and began Skagit Relicensing in 2019. To meet North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) security standards, City Light is proposing substation and hydro facility improvements such as access cards, fencing, camera coverage, and vehicle and pedestrian gates.

City Light also complies with a wide range of permitting requirements and environmental regulations. Examples include the mitigation of soil contamination at former substations, and ongoing environmental mitigation in the Endangered Species Act project. Street-use permits and regulations are a major part of City Light projects that expand and repair the electric distribution system.

Endangered Species Compliance

The Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a 50-year, ecosystem-based plan that was prepared to address the declining populations of salmon, steelhead and other species of fish and wildlife in the Cedar River basin. The HCP was prepared under the Endangered Species Act and is designed both to provide certainty for the City of Seattle's drinking water supply and to protect and restore habitats of 83 species of fish and wildlife that may be affected by the City of Seattle's water supply and hydroelectric operations on the Cedar River. Seattle Public Utilities is continuing to implement its commitments under the HCP, which include downstream habitat protection and restoration, upland forest restoration, logging road decommissioning, and ongoing monitoring. City Light is also acquiring salmon habitat in the Green/Duwamish, Skagit, and Snohomish watersheds.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted an audit of select City of Seattle facilities, practices and procedures, in order to assess City compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and reported its findings to the City. While the City is largely in compliance, there are some elements within facilities that the DOJ has requested that the City update or alter to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The City is working on an update to its ADA Transition Plan that will guide the development of a long-term strategy that manages the City's most critical public-facing ADA deficiencies first and maximizes accessibility to the greatest extent possible.

A project manager added in 2011 will continue to coordinate and oversee implementation of ADA improvements in certain City facilities, determine and report compliance to DOJ, and review and modify as needed the facilities design and construction process with regard to the ADA. The City is in the process of moving towards a new approach to ADA improvements in which these improvements are included in ongoing maintenance and other remodeling work.

In order to provide additional proactive monitoring of compliance with ADA standards for new capital projects, in 2013 the City added additional staff dedicated to monitoring ADA compliance of new projects. An additional position was added in 2014 to the Department of Parks and Recreation,

dedicated to ADA compliance coordination, and in 2015 the Seattle Department of Transportation added one strategic advisor and funding for an ADA transition plan to ensure curb ramp compliance. The 2020 budget includes funding for two additional curb ramp inspectors in SDOT to ensure ramps are constructed correctly to ADA standards.

Historic Preservation

Seattle's commitment to historic preservation began with citizen efforts in the 1960s to block the demolition of two of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods—Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square. Both neighborhoods were threatened with proposals that would have irreversibly changed the character of the districts. The Pike Place Market was faced with an Urban Renewal Plan that would have demolished it, while Pioneer Square was threatened with a major roadway project. In 1970, the City Council created the Pioneer Square Preservation District, Seattle's first historic district. Then, in 1971, voters approved an initiative to create the Pike Place Market Historical District. In 1973, the City Council adopted a Landmarks Preservation Ordinance to safeguard properties of historic and architectural significance throughout the City, and more than 450 buildings, sites, and objects have now been designated as City landmarks.

The City of Seattle currently owns or maintains many of those landmarks, including libraries, park buildings, and fire stations. In 2001, the City began a comprehensive effort to survey and inventory both City-owned properties and privately-owned properties throughout the City. To date, the Department of Neighborhoods has completed surveys and inventories in 20 of the City's neighborhoods including Ballard, Belltown, Cascade, Central, Columbia City, Denny Triangle, Downtown, Fremont, Georgetown, Mount Baker, North Beacon Hill, North Rainier, Pike-Pine, Pioneer Square, Queen Anne, South Lake Union, South Park, South Seattle, University, Wallingford, Waterfront, as well as The University of Washington, city-owned properties, pre-1906 residential buildings, and neighborhood commercial buildings throughout the City. The results of those efforts are available in a searchable database on the [Department of Neighborhoods](#) website.