Council Information Requests

Council Request Tracking

The following table tracks the requests received during the budget deliberations alphabetical by Councilmember last name. The pages that follow have the question listed as noted. You may also click on the number of the question to be taken directly to the question.

If we have mis-understood your question, did not answer your question or if you have additional questions, please contact Toni Call at 425.452.7863 or tcall@bellevuewa.gov.

Thank you.

#	Council Member	Request (paraphrased)	Date Question Received	Status
1)	Barksdale	Are there any savings related to remote work, and are we continuing to carry those into the future? If so, is that reflected in the budget?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
2)	Barksdale	a) What does the Cultural Liaison Program entail? b) How is the funding allocated for equity training being supported long-term?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
3)	Barksdale	When will City Council review KPIs?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
4)	Barksdale	Are the Grand Connection, EasTrail (East Main) and Wilburton still funded in the CIP?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
5)	Barksdale	How much are we investing in Bellevue Fire CARES?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
6)	Nieuwenhuis	What are we assuming for the recovery and how is that going to impact different funds and reserves and long-term forecasts? Is this a V-shape or other recovery? How nimble can we be to adjust going forward?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
7)	Nieuwenhuis	Would like to know more regarding additional funds in homelessness and affordable housing and what specially we expect that to be spent and how will it impact those areas.	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
8)	Nieuwenhuis	Regarding FS10, what is the phased approach and should it be reconsidered?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
9)	Nieuwenhuis	Will there be environmental issues for littering if Parks are not maintained at current levels?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
10)	Robertson	Is the curbside management study included in the CIP? If so, does it include or can it be modified to include a downtown/Bel Red circulator? If not, what would be a reasonable cost estimate for such a study?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below

#	Council Member	Request (paraphrased)	Date Question Received	Status
11)	Robertson	Where is funding for the multicultural and aquatics centers?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
12)	Robinson	Can revenue from increased affordable housing sales taxes supplant existing spending?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
13)	Robinson	Is it possible to reduce Utility fees, specifically by educating the public on the importance of regulating what they can flush down their toilets?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	In progress
14)	Robinson	Why are we seeing a 1.3% increase to enterprise funds?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
15)	Robinson	Do we charge our surrounding cities enough for the services we provide? Most specifically, Mercer Island with Fire services.	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
16)	Robinson	I had a question about p. 11 bullet points: the 3rd: happy to temporarily stop the NEP program; and 7th: please consider partnering with organizations like WTIA, etc on pro bono smart city projects. And the 8th: Would like to prioritize the LED light implementation for streets/intersections without ped/bike infrastructure	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	In progress
17)	Robinson	Can we contract the 5.0 FTE Development Services employees, so it is more of a temporary hire?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	In progress
18)	Stokes	Please explain the importance of holding to the 15% General Fund reserve.	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
19)	Stokes	What would we have expected for the 2021-2022 budget without COVID-19?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
20)	Stokes/Lee	Should we be transferring more out of the CIP and into the general fund?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
21)	Zahn	Please provide pie charts showing breakdown of Strategic Target Areas with 20% of operating expenditures or greater.	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
22)	Zahn	Are there ways to look at street partnerships to engage with community to help beautify our parks in the event we reduce maintenance?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
23)	Zahn	Regarding the Well-KEPT program—what would it take to keep that program in 2022?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
24)	Zahn	Explain what the 130th TOD parking lot is.	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below
25)	Zahn	Can we take funding to green the City fleet and facilities?	Council Meeting 10/19/2020	Responded below

1) Are there any savings related to remote work, and are we continuing to carry those into the future? If so, is that reflected in the budget?

The preliminary budget includes changes to operations from COVID-19. Our facilities have been closed or will be closed to close to a year by the time we are able to open in Phase 3 (depending on when the Governor moves the county to Phase 3). The proposed budget includes reductions to certain areas including facilities and others that do continue. We anticipate additional changes to occur once a better understanding of the new normal post pandemic. We acknowledge that what is included in the budget is a first step in establishing post-COVID-19 operations.

2) What does the Cultural Liaison Program entail? b) How is the funding allocated for equity training being supported long-term?

a. The Community Cultural Liaison program is a civic engagement tool that will employ community members from underserved populations to facilitate access to and delivery of culturally competent services. Bellevue recognizes that increasing equity, access, and inclusion is essential to providing excellent public service, but changing demographics has led to a gap in the City's ability to effectively engage cultural subgroups. The intent of this program is to strengthen the two-way communication between the City and the diverse community it serves. This new budget proposal, which has a budget of $86,700 over the biennium, will provide serves to departments City-wide, and will bring a return on investment through in-house resources while enhancing community-wide services. The program will employ 10-12 cultural liaisons under short- (12 month) and mid-term (24 month) contracts and will be managed by the Diversity Advantage Team.

b. Funding allocated for equity training is in addition to the existing training program administered jointly by the Diversity Advantage team and Human Resources. Added funds will be used to support development and implementation of equity training for staff. Ongoing management, reinforcement, and measurement will be built into departmental diversity work plans.

3) When will City Council review KPIs?

Included in the full budget book at (2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Book) are the KPI's by strategic target area, in addition to proposal metrics by proposal. Staff is ready to review with councilmembers any specific areas of interest. Please contact Council office staff to schedule a meeting at any timefor discussion.

4) Are the Grand Connection, EasTrail (East Main) and Wilburton still funded in the CIP?

Grand Connection – Early Implementation (project CD-44) which links up Wilburton to meet up with EasTrail, is funded at $5.5 million in the 2021-2027 CIP. Eastside Rail Corridor (G-103) funded the design and implementation of EasTrail crossings and connections at priority locations in Bellevue through prior CIP and the project continues to have $2 million of carryforward funding.

5) How much are we investing in Bellevue Fire CARES?

For Bellevue Fire CARES program, currently the preliminary budget includes $1.66M for the biennium, of which, $320K is contributed by Bellevue ($160K per year). The remainder is funded by King County EMS levy dedicated for Mobile Integrated Health (MIH CARES).

6) What are we assuming for the recovery and how is that going to impact different funds and reserves and long-term forecasts? Is this a V-shape or other recovery? How nimble can we be to adjust going forward?

There's been lots of debate on the shapes of the COVID recovery paths from V-shaped to U-shaped to swoosh-shaped, and more in between. As the economy continues reopen, and that it has been slower than originally estimated by economists, lead economic experts believe the recovery will take several years. The city's current forecast assumes return to 2019 levels in 2023 which means the city will have lost 3 full years of economic growth – primarily in sales and business & occupation taxes. This assumption is in alignment with other cities assumptions, and with the city's economic forecasting service, IHS Markit. As with much about the pandemic, allowing for flexibility and being able to respond to continuing information is important. The city's preliminary budget includes one-time funding to "bridge" the time and allow for intentional course corrections. One-time funding in 2021 is $9M, reducing to $6M in 2022.

7) Would like to know more regarding additional funds in homelessness and affordable housing and what specially we expect that to be spent and how will it impact those areas.

Homelessness	The preliminary budget includes $450,000 annually in the general fund for increased services for the 24-hour homeless shelter operations.
Affordable Housing	The preliminary budget includes resources for limited term employees in development services and community development to support the planning and code/land use work for the affordable housing initiatives. It also includes $300,000 of one-time consultant work for specialized or surge work related to the affordable housing strategy.

8) Regarding FS10, what is the phased approach, and should it be reconsidered?

Originally, Fire Station 10 was scheduled to open and be fully staffed in Q4 of 2022 to align with the facility's construction schedule and planned opening. To help bridge the 2021-2022 financial gap, significant savings were identified by delaying the in-service date of the engine asset. This rethinking of the Fire Station 10 opening would build the new station on schedule and relocate previously identified units into the station for an on-time opening. However, the new asset, Engine 110 would be delayed by approximately 6 months and placed in service in Q2 2023. Recruitment and staffing of Engine 110 would be scheduled with a phased approach during the 2022 and 2023 firefighter recruit academies. In total this phased approach achieves a $3.5M savings in the 2021-2022 budget, with a net savings of $1.5M in the first 3 years. Council, can through the budget process, direct a different approach.

9) Will there be environmental issues for littering if Parks are not maintained at current levels?

The existing park garbage can holding capacity will not change. We anticipate less frequent service with liners changed when the garbage cans are full, hence less service frequency. We don't anticipate garbage overflowing from existing cans. Litter, defined as garbage on the ground will be picked up when garbage cans are serviced as is currently done. We don't anticipate any environmental impacts.

10) Is the curbside management study included in the CIP? If so, does it include or can it be modified to include a downtown/Bel Red circulator? If not, what would be a reasonable cost estimate for such a study?

Transportation has resources in its professional services budget to complete ongoing work with the Mobility Implementation Plan and also for a Curbside Management Plan. The MIP is the priority, however there are sufficient resources to complete the Curbside Management Plan by the end of 2022. With regard to the downtown circulator, this work will need to be scoped out. The Transportation Department can absorb in its budget submittal a higher-level needs assessment, including engagement with the Chamber, BDA, King County Metro and Visit Bellevue. However, if the assessment shows promise, additional funding will be needed for more detailed plans which can be addressed after the needs assessment is completed.

11) Where is funding for the multicultural and aquatics centers?

Earlier analyses on both the cross-cultural study and aquatics feasibility study were paid for from council contingency. While no further funded studies are specifically designated in the preliminary budget, the 2021-2027 CIP includes a $2 million council contingency which could be used for further work.

12) Can revenue from increased affordable housing sales taxes supplant existing spending?

State law (RCW 82.14.530) states up to 10 percent of the moneys collected under this section may be used to supplant existing local funds that currently are responsive to the spending requirements noted in RCW. In response to council action on HB 1590, staff is in the process of developing an overall work program and establishing the specific spending requirement in alignment with RCW. Staff will return to Council for further direction as the workplan is prepared.

13) Is it possible to reduce Utility fees, specifically by educating the public on the importance of regulating what they can flush down their toilets?

Staff is currently working on a response and will either be printed in an upcoming packet or will be included with the upcoming Utilities presentation.

14) Why are we seeing a 1.3% increase to enterprise funds?

Enterprise funds consist primarily of development services and utilities, along with a few smaller funds such as the parks enterprise fund. The majority of the increase is from Development Services cost of service study which accounts for growth of the city, and utilities due to pass through costs from King County and Cascade Water Alliance.

15) Do we charge our surrounding cities enough for the services we provide? Most specifically, Mercer Island with Fire services.

Bellevue Fire currently provides fire protection services under a renewable 10-year contract with the following communities: Beaux Arts, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Medina, Newcastle and Yarrow Point. This contract incorporates individual community's calls for service, population, and assessed valuation in the calculation in their fee for service to ensure equitable distribution of the fees for service. By incorporating the factors that allow and accommodate the growth of these communities, the fee proportionally shifts to those growing communities that require a greater share of the services.

Bellevue and Mercer Island do not have a contract for service. Bellevue and Mercer Island share a long-term relationship through mutual and automatic aid agreements for fire protection services. Bellevue benefits from this relationship with an additional Battalion Chief when needed and from an agreement to utilize Mercer Island's police boat. Mercer Island benefits from utilization from the nearest Bellevue ladder resource when needed. Resources are commonly shared across jurisdictional boundaries through mutual and automatic aid calls.

Bellevue Fire is also an Advanced Life Support (ALS) provider for King County and provides a contract for services for specific ALS resources that extend past the city and contract cities' limits through Issaquah and

North Bend. This contract is provided through King County and is a 100% cost recovered resource funded by a King County property tax levy.

16) I had a question about p. 11 bullet points: the 3rd: happy to temporarily stop the NEP program; and 7th: please consider partnering with organizations like WTIA, etc on pro bono smart city projects. And the 8th: Would like to prioritize the LED light implementation for streets/intersections without ped/bike infrastructure

Staff is working on a response and will provide in an upcoming packet.

17) Can we contract the 5.0 FTE Development Services employees, so it is more of a temporary hire?

Response will be provided with the development services rate discussion on October 26. Staff will provide written response in an upcoming packet.

18) Please explain the importance of holding to the 15% General Fund reserve.

Keeping a healthy reserve level is very important for the city to have a buffer against unforeseeable events such as economic downturns, natural disasters, and other risks, it is especially important when economic outlook is uncertain, and the timing of recovery is unpredictable. GFOA best practice recommended minimal level of reserve is 2 months of regular revenues or expenditures.

Reserve level is also one of the important factors the bond rating agency reviews to determine municipalities' ability to weather economic and other risks, keeping reserve in line with Council policy of 15% helps the city keep its AAA bond rating.

19) What would we have expected for the 2021-2022 budget without COVID-19?

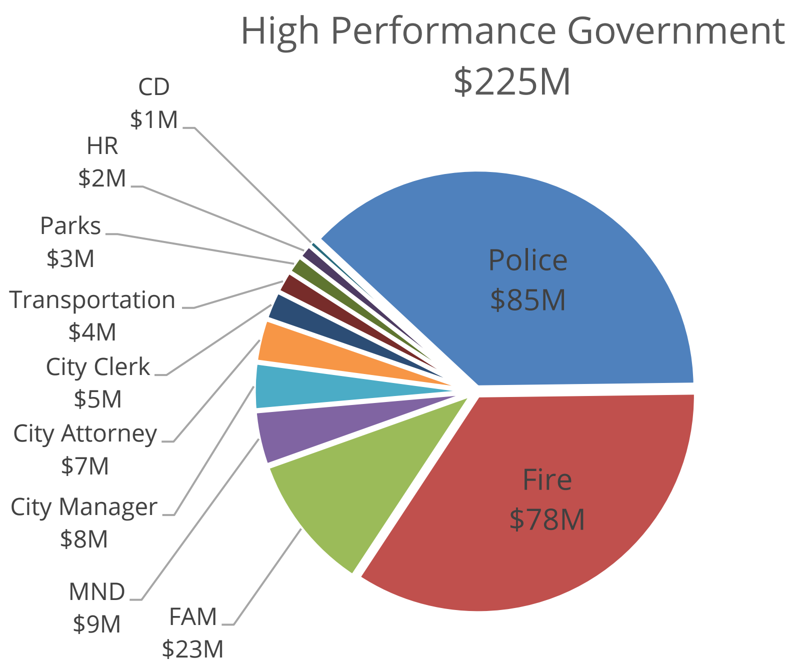
Two years ago, when we adopted the 2019 -2020 budget, general fund was projected to continue to build reserves through 2020 and then will be drawn on to balance the budget in the out years. At that time, the gap project was approximately $3M in 2021, and additional $1 Million gap each year after.

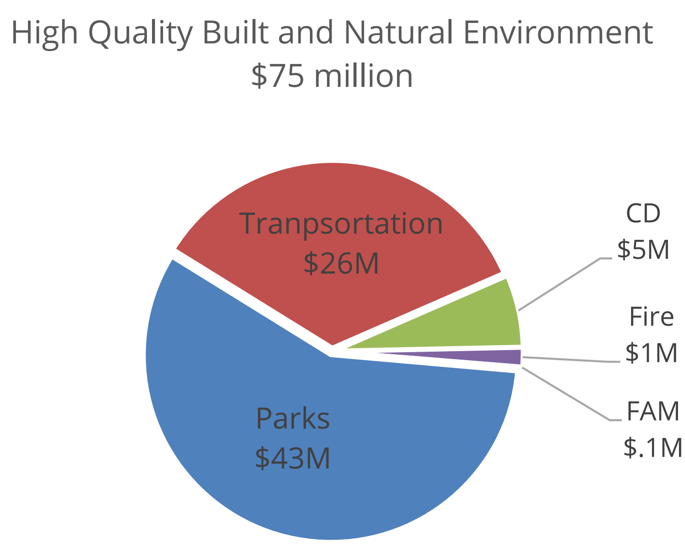
20) Should we be transferring more out of the CIP and into the general fund?

Staff will return on November 2 with further discussion.

21) Please provide pie charts showing breakdown of Strategic Target Areas with 20% of operating expenditures or greater.

Per the request for pie charts for General Fund spending in STA categories that represent >20% of General Fund spending, we have provided charts below for (1) High Performance Government, which accounts for $225 million in General Fund spending (61% of General Fund spending, excluding reserves and transfers between funds) and (2) High Quality Built and Natural Environment, which accounts for $75 million in general fund spending (20% of General Fund spending, excluding reserves and transfers between funds).





22) Are there ways to look at street partnerships to engage with community to help beautify our parks in the event we reduce maintenance?

Offering opportunities to engage citizens in Parks landscape maintenance activities to deliver a higher quality service and create a more cohesive community is something Parks takes pride in providing. In 2019, the Parks Department coordinated 2,689 volunteers who provided 28,904 hours of maintenance activities through various program and partnerships. (Stewardship Saturdays, Eco Fridays, Bellevue Botanical Garden, Master Gardener Demonstration Sites - are just a few examples) Parks provides a wide variety of opportunities to different targeted audiences designed to engage citizens in a safe and effective manner. While we can look into the possibility of expanding opportunities for interested community groups, it is not practical to use community volunteers to provide primary service delivery/on-going routine maintenance for streetscape landscaping and park maintenance.

There are inherent hazards associated with work in the right of way (ROW). The work can be dangerous and requires permits, traffic control plans, and appropriate tools and equipment. With streetscape landscaping, these costs and liabilities are passed onto the contractor. Although it may be possible to select a few low traffic volumes site to help reduce liability, staff will need to work with risk management and legal to ensure safety for our residents.

23) Regarding the Well-KEPT program—what would it take to keep that program in 2022?

The Well-KEPT program costs in General Fund in 2022 was $57,263. In 2020 Parks department received $150,000 funding in the King County Well Kept project in the Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund for the design and construction of a Trail Detour Project in Coal Creek Natural Area Park (Ordinance 6517). This project will be using the Parks Department Well-Kept program to provide employment opportunities to Bellevue youth in 2021. The city will continue to look for opportunities for grant funding for 2022.

24) Explain what the 130th TOD parking lot is.

In 2015, Council adopted Resolution 8903, approving execution of an Amended and Restated Umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sound Transit, which included provisions related to the transfer of the 130th Avenue TOD property to the City of Bellevue. Based on existing market conditions, property values and the contractual timeframe in which the City has committed to delivering the 300-stall park-and-ride in the conveyance agreement in time for the beginning of East Link revenue service.

This project will design and construct an interim park-and-ride facility adjacent to the light rail station between 130th Avenue NE and 132nd Avenue NE, while the City concurrently evaluates future opportunities for a Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

25) Can we take funding to green the City fleet and facilities?

As part of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI), the Finance & Asset Management Department has been endeavoring to improve these areas of City operations. Below the Department has outlined the short-term targets outlined in the Energy and Mobility sections of the ESI Strategic Plan, highlighted achievements and noted work that will take place over the next biennium.

Energy Target – Reduce energy used in buildings by 25 percent and source 100 percent of electricity from renewable energy by 2030.
All city-owned buildings are benchmarked for energy and water use so that low-performing buildings can be prioritized for upgrades. A facility condition assessment was conducted to inventory building equipment that identifies all fossil fuel powered equipment and remainder of useful-life to plan for cost-effective building electrification. Lighting audits were conducted to further improve operational spaces and systematic upgrades will be made over the next biennium.

As the largest city-owned building, City Hall is the model of high performance across the portfolio. Smart building analytics are used for ongoing commissioning that enables our building engineers track system operations in real-time and detect faults immediately rather than waiting for schedule maintenance. The building features a heat recovery system and an oil-free chiller that heat and cool as efficiently as possible. Solar feasibility studies are being conducted to determine roof capacity to support renewable energy.

Green Fleet Target – Electrify 50 percent of light-duty vehicles and reduce fuel usage by 15 percent by 2030.

The municipal fleet has 127 fuel efficient vehicles (i.e. 119 hybrid, 3 plug-in hybrids, and 4 electric vehicles). Approximately 67 percent of fleet diesel is bio-diesel and is cost effectively sourced from local, commercial businesses. Based on current market conditions, there are cost-saving opportunities to replace light-duty sedan vehicles with used electric vehicles. Options for replacing SUVs and pick-ups are emerging in the next two years, but these newer models will likely cost more than the budgeted replacement amounts and require additional funding. The next biennium will focus on installing building infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging and developing a green fleet strategy to incorporate electric vehicle purchases into the vehicle replacement plan over the next 5-10 years.