

2021 – 2022 PROPOSED BUDGET QUERY SET 6 COVER LIST

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15	Planner Positions Support
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2021-2022 PROPOSED BUDGET

Budget Query

Date: October 13, 2020
 Budget Query: 15
 From: Councilmember Christy Carr
 Date Rec'd: October 6, 2020
 Re: Planner position support

Question/Topic:

Does PCD have permit data to support filling two planner positions? Can a significant increase in permit turnaround time be shown over the course of the current vacancies? Are there sufficient “low complexity” permit types to justify two planner level (vs. associate or senior) positions? Are permit volumes anticipated to increase (2020 saw a decrease in sales tax from construction)?

Response:

There are currently two vacant planner positions in PCD as a result of promotions within the organization. There are three planners dedicated primarily to current planning including two associate planners and one senior planner. The Proposed Budget does not make a change to the number of regular planning positions. One term-limited position, which has never been filled, is eliminated.

Planners support both land use and building activities. For land use, planners typically focus on low-complexity permit types. Between 2017 and 2019, approximately 47% of the land use permits submitted, or 341 of a total of 719, were of the entry level complexity. For building, entry level planners are primarily responsible for building permit review. Between 2017 and 2019, entry level planners reviewed approximately 40% of the building permits, or 362 of a total of 894, that were reviewed by the planners. Assigning the building permit review to an entry level planner allows associate and senior planners the ability to support more complicated land use reviews and some of the long-range planning efforts. Furthermore, project permit applications are subject to the permit processing timelines established in RCW 36.70B, which include time periods to determine completeness of an application (30 days after submittal) and to issue a decision (120 days after completeness).

Summary of Budget Dollar and FTE change:

	2021	2022	One-time or ongoing	Comment
Estimated \$ Change				
FTE Change				

The Proposed Budget includes the assumption that these existing positions will be filled to address existing workload. Experience since the decision earlier in 2020 to hold these positions vacant shows an increase in the time for issuance of a single-family residential building permit. A comparison from April to August of 2019 to the same time period in 2020, shows an increase from 147 to 243 days, for an increase of 96 days.

Additionally, entry level planners support day-to-day inquiries received via phone and email, which have seen a significant increase during the pandemic.

Additional Detail:

Our fee study consultant indicated that 2019 was a peak year in the region for permit volume. With the lifting of the development moratoriums, and the impacts of COVID-19, it is difficult to anticipate exactly what the years following 2020 will bring. However, the Department is still very busy with daily inquiries, as well as new land use and building permit submittals. Workload is comparable so far this year to recent years.

- 814 building permits were submitted in 2019, and in 2020, 633 building permits were submitted through mid-October. Annualized, the 2020 numbers are just slightly below 2019 numbers, assuming that we are 80% of the way through the year.
- Land use permits increased from 256 in 2018 to 320 in 2019, and there are currently 217 new land use permit submittals to date in 2020. Annualized, the 2020 numbers are between the 2018 and 2019 numbers, assuming that we are 80% of the way through the year.



2021-2022 PROPOSED BUDGET

Budget Query

Date: October 20, 2020
 Budget Query: 24
 From: Councilmember Rasham Nassar
 Date Rec'd: October 6, 2020
 Re: Racial Bias hotline alternatives

Question/Topic:

What are the service alternatives for providing a hotline for residents to contact who have racial bias complaints to report?

Response:

Community members have expressed an interest in collecting data on bias incidents in the community. Hate crime offenses as defined by RCW 9A.36.080 are reported to, and investigated by, the Bainbridge Island Police Department. Other criminal incidents that involve an element of bias but do not meet the definition of a hate crime are also reported and investigated. Data on these offense types are maintained in the department's record management system.

Currently there is no process for the collection of non-criminal bias incident reports from residents. These incidents may include situations where someone uses offensive language directed at an individual or group based on a protected status but does not include a direct threat or other crime. Preliminary review of this issue has included exploring existing resources as a means of collecting reports and researching processes utilized by other cities.

In all cases of criminal incidents involving bias elements, the response of an officer is preferred to complete the report, collect any evidence, and initiate the investigation. In cases where the individual is unsure if a crime has occurred, the response of an officer is appropriate as well. For non-criminal incidents where a police response is not necessary, a tool for collecting data would simplify reporting and provide convenience for community members who wish to have incidents documented.

Summary of Budget Dollar and FTE change:

	2021	2022	One-time or ongoing	Comment
Estimated \$ Change				
FTE Change				

The current online reporting tool used by the department is one potential resource. This program, Coplogic, is used by agencies throughout the county to allow an online alternative for citizens submitting specific reports that do not require a police response. Crime reports accepted include harassing phone calls, identity theft, theft of property, and vandalism. Examples of non-criminal reports include lost property, traffic complaints, and information only reports that relate to suspicious activity. All reports submitted through this portal are reviewed by the department and complainants contacted.

Adding a new reporting category for biased-based incidents is possible as part of the existing system without added expense to the department. The data fields can be tailored to collect the information most appropriate for the purpose and the report is retained within the existing records system. Information is more easily retrieved for analysis in this system. Although not specifically criminal in nature, collecting this data is informative for the community and may aid in identifying developing trends.

A second option is to create a stand-alone online reporting tool for non-criminal incidents. The cities of Seattle and Eugene, Oregon use this approach. As much larger cities, each utilize a separate department within the city to collect this data. The Seattle Office for Civil Rights collects information on bias incidents and discrimination claims. The Seattle Police Department responds to all criminal matters. Officers also complete non-criminal bias incident reports when encountered. The police department publishes statistics on both criminal and non-criminal bias incidents.

<http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/civil-rights/outreach-and-engagement/report-bias>

<http://www.seattle.gov/police/information-and-data/bias-crime-unit>

The City of Eugene Human Rights & Neighborhood Involvement (HRNI) collects data in that city. Police complete reports for hate crimes and provide that information to the human rights program. Individuals that report hate activity which does not rise to the level of crime are referred to human rights program. The HRNI also reviews hate crimes reported to police.

<https://www.eugene-or.gov/529/Hate-and-Bias>

The feasibility and expense of an alternate option has not been established. There are expected costs related to the acquisition and implementation of a new system; as well as training for staff in operating and maintaining the system. Staff members are familiar with the existing system and all relevant data would be stored in the same location.

Additional Detail:

The Washington State Human Rights Commission investigates discrimination complaints related to employment, housing, places of public accommodation, credit, and insurance issues. Related complaints can be filed online or by contacting the agency.

<https://www.hum.wa.gov/>