

2023 Budget Supplemental Questions

Please answer the following questions in a word document and return to Council. The answers to these questions will be provided to council as supplemental information. While not part of the physical budget presentation to Council, departments should be prepared to answer questions Council may have on these supplemental questions. If you feel that you have provided an answer in a previous question, please don't repeat your answer, simply refer to the earlier question/answer.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide your 2023 strategic goals; how are they different from 2022? In what way, if at all, are your strategic changes demonstrated in your budget request?

Public Works is focused on similar goals to prior year. However, one significant addition: ongoing solid waste export problems surfaced in 2022 and are a top priority for Public Works to solve.

- **Find short- and long-term solutions for ongoing problems with waste export services (including capacity for future growth)**
 - Budget includes three new FTEs to enhance Solid Waste planning efforts
 - One of these new FTE will have recycling/sustainability focus
 - Need to find long-term solution for waste export service needs
- **Coordination for ST3/Light Rail Station planning**
 - Budget includes PW staff time and consultants in planning efforts
 - Station area planning and Everett Link planning underway
 - Second phase of East/West Corridor High-Capacity Transit Study underway
- **Updates to Transportation Element of the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan**
 - Budget includes PW staff time and consultants in planning efforts
 - Update transportation modeling, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), transportation policies, Transportation Element (TE) document, and Planning Commission process
- **Upgrades to Road Maintenance facilities**
 - Budget includes design for development of the Arlington Operations Center and Road Maintenance Granite Fall site
- **Catch up on growing NPDES requirements and drainage work backlogs**
 - Budget includes request for 6 new FTEs for two additional road maintenance drainage crews
- **Re-focus on staff training**
 - Shifting out of the pandemic, a re-focus on training for staff and supervisors is necessary – there has been a lot of staff changeover and many employees are in new roles, including leadership positions

National, state, and local landscape:

1. What are the federal, state and local issues facing your work? What risks or opportunities does that create for you in 2023 and beyond? What is your plan to leverage the opportunity or mitigate the risk? What support do you need?
 - **Solid Waste risks:**
 - Waste export services (and railroad capacity) not meeting county needs
 - Staff stretched thin by current workload and at higher risk of burnout
 - Solid Waste system infrastructure stressed by continued growth
 - Difficulty filling and retaining entry level laborer positions
 - Tip fees as is (unchanged since ~2008), will not keep pace with cost escalation and system improvement needs
 - **Road Fund risks:**
 - Staffing limitations for engineers and other specialized positions create challenges to delivering robust Transportation Improvement Program
 - Consultant services more limited than in prior years
 - Future revenue shortfalls:
 - 1% annual road levy increase not keeping pace with system needs and cost escalation
 - Fuel tax revenue flat (and lower than pre-COVID)
 - Traffic impact fees trending low based on types of development
2. What, if any, new mandates do you have impacting your work? Are they funded or unfunded? What is the plan for accomplishing the work?
 - **Solid Waste mandates:**
 - State legislation could impose unfunded requirements on the solid waste system
 - E.g., requirements for more organics collection
 - E.g., shifts to how the system operates such as a comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility law
 - E.g., Addressing Greenhouse gases
 - **Road Fund mandates:**
 - Growing NPDES mandates (unfunded)
 - Six additional FTEs requested to keep up with work
 - Growth management and concurrency needs (funding shortfall)
 - Grants and traffic impact fees are primary funding source, so largely depends on securing grants

Programs

1. List programs, projects and services within your department funded through federal COVID/ARPA funds. What, if any, of those programs are you recommending ongoing funding for and what is the source of ongoing funding?
 - **N/A for COVID/ARPA funds**

2. What new programs are you launching for 2023? What need or efficiency is that new program addressing? How is that program funded for sustainability? What metrics are in place to determine effectiveness?
 - **New: Road Safety Plan implementation**
 - Apply systemic approach to safety to reduce the number and severity of collisions in the county road system
3. If different than #2, what are your areas of significant investment? What are you not doing because of that investment?
 - See questions #1 and #2

Internal Operations

1. What is your department doing to streamline processes or deliver services in a new way? How do your budget allocation requests play into these innovations? Are there ways which a different budget approach, e.g. several departments sharing a resource, could achieve the same or better results in a more cost-effective way?

Innovations (Continuous Improvement Focus!):

- Public Works continues to fully leverage Cartegraph asset management system with additional expansion and integration of the system for asset management and replacement of outdated databases, including:
 - Additional system improvements and modules for analysis and planning
 - Development of a consolidation plan for project asset, information and tracking systems utilizing key technology solutions such as Cartegraph, SharePoint, geospatial data, and other solutions
 - Full integration and utilization of a map-based citizen request issue management system for infrastructure management and maintenance
 - Alignment and partnerships with other county departments to develop enterprise-wide governance structures and systems for technology solutions
 - Public Works has recently made significant progress in cleaning up years and years of accumulated paper records. Most records have been reviewed, and those past retention have been disposed.
 - The next step is to digitize records that must be retained long term.
2. What, if any, hiring challenges are you experiencing? How is that affecting your level of service or internal operations? How are you mitigating those operational challenges and/or what is your plan for recruitment?
 - **Hiring - challenges:**
 - Catching up from historic high retirements/turnover in 2020 and 2021
 - Competitive labor market for hiring external workers
 - Job market shortages for certain critical positions:
 - Seasonal road workers

- Entry level Solid Waste laborers and site attendants
 - Senior level engineers
 - Specialty positions: electricians, traffic signal techs, geologists, etc.
- **Hiring - impacts:**
 - Slower delivery of capital projects
 - Backlog of road system maintenance (deferred maintenance can lead to more expensive system improvement needs later)
 - When short staffed, some RM crews are shut down
 - Solid Waste had to start the Litter Wranglers late and end early due to low staffing levels and interest in the positions
 - High OT and staff burnout can lead to turnover
 - **Hiring - solutions:**
 - Actively recruit, advertise, and network open positions
 - Class and comp adjustments needed for certain positions
 - Consultants can fill some gaps
 - Training new and emerging leaders
 - Participate in Pathway to Jobs program
 - Attend recruiting fairs in person and bring large equipment
3. Please provide a list of all vacant position titles, position codes, date vacated, and date first posted. This should be a separate page or spreadsheet attachment.
- See attached list of vacant positions
4. What effect has the increase of inflation and/or supply chain issues had on your department? What, if any, services, or projects have you had to adjust to accommodate for this? (i.e. moving to outside contracted services, delaying of project starts and/or purchasing, redistribution of workload, etc.)
- Inflation:**
- Increased costs for materials, services, and equipment reduces available funding for programs and projects
 - Continued inflation could cause delays to important capital projects and capital improvements

Successes:

1. Take this opportunity to share one significant success in your department over this past year. What made it a success?

Recent successes:

- Solid Waste division's heroic efforts overcoming constant/daily challenges
- Completion of major paper records/files cleanup
- Recent success securing large transportation grants
- Significant progress in reducing position vacancies and filling certain key positions (despite this success, still looming hiring challenges as described in question 2)