

Citizens of Edmonds and members of the Edmonds City Council:

I present to you the Proposed 2023 City of Edmonds Budget.

After 3 years of Covid, now more than ever it is time to invest in our City. With strong sales tax revenues, a significant city surplus, and federal rescue plan funding, we are in a great position to invest in people and our City, while maintaining a balanced budget.

Tonight, I will highlight three areas of significant investment in my budget. One - is significant increases in public safety; two - is improving our neighborhoods; and, three - providing more investments to our most underserved community, the "Uptown" area along Highway 99.

Budget Priorities

1. Significant Increase in Public Safety

My first priority for our 2023 Budget is an unprecedented increase in public safety resources. Our community's safety has always been my number one priority. I will not wait for crime to reach your doorstep. We must be ever vigilant in keeping our community safe and welcoming. As part of my continued effort to modernize our Police Department and keep our community safe, I am proposing investing an additional \$3 million in our Police Department. This will include the hiring of eight more Edmonds Police officers.

New Patrol District

Five of these officers will be assigned to a brand-new police patrol district. We must ensure that there is sufficient police response for our entire City, not just in some parts. Our City has seen growing call volumes in specific geographic areas. This new district will help improve police response times citywide and provide enough officers to meet the demand.

Community Storefront Officer

In addition to the patrol officers, one of the new police officer positions will include a new community storefront officer assigned to the Highway 99 area to provide crime prevention and problem-solving support, instead of just crisis response.

Problem Solving Detectives

Two of the new police officers will be assigned as Problem Solving Emphasis Detectives. They will join two others already assigned to form a more effective unit with a broad range of investigative techniques to proactively detect and deter crimes, including crimes related to gangs, burglaries, vehicle thefts and other crimes against people and property.

Police Equipment

Not only must our City ensure that our police have sufficient personnel to keep our community safe, but that they have the necessary equipment to do their job safely.

This will include providing many more police cars to enable police services during multiple incidents under new legal restrictions, as well as new specialty equipment for the problem-emphasis team to aid in the capture of dangerous felony subjects.

City Prosecutor

We must ensure we not only have the proper police coverage but are prosecuting crimes in a fair and equitable manner. To ensure we are prosecuting crimes fairly and to save taxpayer dollars, we will have our own in-house city prosecutor. In the past we have contracted out this service which has led to escalating costs and challenges with oversight of work being performed.

2. Neighborhood Improvements

A second priority of mine is to enhance the livability of our neighborhoods.

Park Improvements

First, we will be funding improvements in many neighborhood parks. The approximate costs for these park programs and improvements is over \$2.7 million. These improvements will include a new permanent restroom and more ADA accessibility at Mathay Ballinger Park. A new inclusive playground will be built at Yost Park. This will allow children of all abilities to be able to play together - similar to Seaview Park and the new Civic Field Park opening in 2023. Additionally, funding is proposed for plans to enhance trails, bridges, water quality and habitat at Yost Park and Shell Creek. We are also proposing the expansion of Parks Beautification Program so our neighborhoods can have more corner parks and hanging flower baskets.

Park Maintenance

As we continue to expand and build parks and open space, we must ensure that they are properly maintained to keep are parks clean and safe. We have seen park usage quadrupled since COVID. This funding will support more park staff and equipment to maintain the new Civic Field Park and Hwy 99 landscape as well as more seasonal park staff to meet the increased park usage.

Open Space

To ensure we can meet the rising costs of land, I am also increasing funding to ensure we have over \$1 million to help secure new Open Space land so residents in every neighborhood throughout our city have the opportunity to enjoy green spaces and parks.

Green Streets

The old way of building cities by blanketing them with asphalt and concrete will not make us resilient in face of our climate crisis. Instead of turning our city into a concrete jungle, our future must be built with sustainable materials that work with our natural environment, not pave over it. Green streets is one way we can reduce pollution in our water and air and accommodate all types of travel. Green streets improve the environment by creating permeable walkways that allow water to pass through them, filter pollutants, do not reflect carbon back into the atmosphere, cost less money than over the life of the project, all while improving livability. Green

streets will protect the water quality in our streams, absorb carbon, improve air quality and neighborhood aesthetics, and provide green connections between parks and open space. They also improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and calm traffic. I am proposing setting aside \$2 million of federal ARPA funds for these projects.

Blighted Property Improvement Fund

Unfortunately, some of our wonderful neighborhoods have buildings that have deteriorated or have simply been abandoned. To help improve the livability of our City and address buildings that are deteriorating, our City will be offering grants to improve blighted property in any of our neighborhood districts. This includes vacant lots, abandoned buildings in derelict or dangerous shape, environmental contamination, water, uncollected litter, and other signs of neglect. This grant program will cost approximately \$250,000.

Climate Crisis

No community is immune from the impacts of our climate crisis. In addition to our green streets, our \$28 million Carbon Recovery Project is near completion. This project will result in using environmentally responsible carbon-recovery technology to prevent sewage sludge combustion releasing harmful emissions, and instead replacing them with an environmentally sustainable byproduct.

And to better adapt our City to the more extreme weather we are now experiencing from the climate crisis, I am proposing purchasing a fourth snow plow. Originally this item was in my 2023 budget, but I have asked it to move up this funding request before Council for this Fall so we can hopefully have it in time for this year's winter storms.

3. Highway 99 Community Investments

My final budget priority is to continue our City's significant investments in the Uptown/Highway 99 corridor. You have noticed the new construction, lane closures, and traffic in this area. This is actually good news because it is a clear sign that this \$10 million project is happening, which will help improve traffic and pedestrian safety and beautification of this area. This first stage of rebuilding Highway 99 will be completed this Spring. Next will be the building and design of stages 2, 3 and 4. This package will bring long-overdue investments to our most diverse and most underserved residents. It will promote transit usage and result in reduced harmful emissions. It will create a safer environment for pedestrians and transit riders by improving sidewalks, adding streetscape improvements, capturing more stormwater to help reduce pollution into our waterways, and establishing a distinct identity along the corridor supporting existing cultural destinations and amenities and creating a welcoming environment. This project will help remove barriers to a community long overlooked and ignored. Total costs will be approximately \$4.56 million.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by thanking our residents for helping make Edmonds such a special and wonderful place to live. Our City's financial position is strong, and we are in a position to make substantive progress towards improving our community for the long-term, while also addressing the challenges of today. This balanced budget prioritizes keeping our public safe, provides investments to the most underserved part of our City, and makes our neighborhoods more livable. Thank you for listening and for your commitment to our community.