



Renton City News

November 2009

MAYOR DELIVERS 2010 BUDGET TO COUNCIL

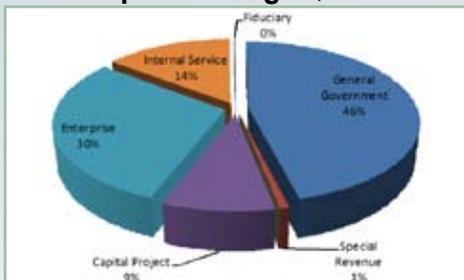
Renton Mayor Denis Law delivered his 2010 proposed budget to the Renton City Council on Monday, October 19, 2009. The budget focuses on core responsibilities and is smaller than the 2009 adopted budget by 3.5%.

The budget also does not include any increase in property tax. Renton is probably one of the only jurisdictions in the region that will not be raising property taxes.

"We will not raise taxes next year," said Mayor Denis Law. "This is not a time to impact our citizens with tax increases to fill our revenue shortfall. We need to make critical choices about how to spend tax dollars and reduce our spending to keep our city's finances strong."

The core city services were established based on community priorities and legally

Total Proposed Budget \$212 Million



mandated programs. Rather than building on a previous year's budget, each city department's budget started at zero. Programs and activities were reviewed and ranked according to how they meet the community's priorities. Those that were not mandated or were less critical than others were reduced or eliminated to close the budget gap.

"This budget is a prudent blueprint to meet difficult economic circumstances and lay a foundation for a responsible future," said Law. "In collaboration with our citizens, we must determine our priorities, develop sustainable practices, and make hard decisions to implement them."

"Renton has a record of innovation, and we won't stop just because of the economic downturn," said Law. "We have to stay focused on opportunity — not in spite of the financial challenges we face, but because of them."

— Mayor Denis Law

The proposed 2010 budget totals \$212 million. Of that, \$98 million represents the General Fund budget, and \$29 million is for capital projects. The rest of the budget is dedicated to other funds.

The city's General Fund provides funding for basic services including police, courts, fire and emergency services, infrastructure maintenance, community services, planning and economic development, and internal support services. All of these services are provided by city employees, and the city's largest expense is wages and benefits. The General Fund is mostly funded by taxes.

52% of the expenditures in the General Fund are dedicated to public safety, which includes police, courts, and fire and emergency services. Other services including maintenance on infrastructure, parks, recreation, community services, and planning and economic development account for 30%, while internal support services make up the remainder.

With the slowing economy, the preliminary projections indicated a gap of about \$6 million between revenues and expenditures, a shortfall of more than 6% of the General Fund budget.

In order to make up this budget gap the proposed budget eliminates 50 positions, 35 of which result in layoffs. When these are added to the 35 positions that were left unfilled last year, the city is operating with 86 fewer people—a 12% reduction in its workforce.



Highlights and impacts of the proposed budget:

- **Police Department:** While there are no reductions that compromise response times and public safety, proposed cuts include administrative and clerical staff. This will result in police officers assuming some of those functions.
- **Fire and Emergency Services:** Continue to hold open positions; restore an aid car; not fill an open deputy chief position; reduce two fire inspector positions. There will be no impact to response times but there will be some reduction in service levels related to conducting inspections and investigations.
- **Community Services:** Reduce seasonal/part-time staff by 80. These reductions will eliminate the Summer Teen musical; close recreation buildings at Kennydale, Kiwanis, Phillip Arnold, Teasdale and Tiffany Parks; reduce or eliminate summer youth programs, volunteer recognition, and holiday lights; impact the museum; reduce geese control, tree removal, and maintenance supplies; decrease frequency of cleaning public restrooms; and reduce the flower program.
- While Renton voters will have the opportunity to cast their vote and consider changing administration of library services in February, currently the city cannot

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afford the desired level of library services and programs. Depending on the outcome of the election, the city may be forced to make reductions in staffing, materials, and other programs.

- Department of Community and Economic Development: Reduce staff by more than 20%. While planning mandates will still be met, this will increase wait time for pre-applications, permit reviews, and inspections. There will be further delay in the progress of community plans and planning support to other city departments.
- Public Works: Eliminate coordination with Sound Transit and Metro and provide minimum compliance with the Commute Trip Reduction program; reduce transportation capital project management program; reduce resources to update the city's comprehensive walkway plan. These reductions will increase the response time to citizen complaints on streets, sidewalks and traffic issues, and result in a decline in street maintenance and street-side litter collection. The Utilities Division will also reduce participation in water education projects and eliminate the Clean Sweep curbside clean-up program.

"In tough times we are continuing to deliver results. We are showing that smart investments can continue to make Renton a city of opportunity."

— Mayor Denis Law

- Others: Consolidate functions and reduce staff in Finance and Information Technology Department; eliminate technical staff and support in Human Resources Department; reduce staff in Mayor's Office, City Clerk's Office, Courts and Communications Division. The city will need to move to a biennial budget, will have to defer GIS and technology upgrades, increase turnaround time for recruitments and limit training. These changes will also result in reduced customer service, delay response time for records requests, reduction in probation services, and limit the city's print and mail capabilities.

Utility and Capital Funds

In the utility funds, a modest rate increase will be presented to Council in early November but the city's utility rates will remain among the lowest in the region.

Of the \$29 million in proposed capital projects, over \$27 million is for transportation and utility projects. The Rainier Avenue project is one of the largest capital projects with a significant part of the funding obtained from state and federal sources. Other key capital projects include building a misdemeanor jail in collaboration with other south county cities, several utility projects, and dredging the seaplane base at the Renton Municipal Airport.

Law also emphasized that 2009 has been a year of accomplishments in Renton.

City Highlights Include:

- The city's crime rate is one of the lowest in South King County and has decreased by double digits for the last three years. The city's fire response was also very commendable—the department was successful in

containing two major fires within a three-week period, and making sure that there were no injuries and minimum property damage.

- One of the largest roadway projects was completed ahead of time and on budget—the Duvall Avenue construction saved the taxpayers \$4 million and now provides the community with additional lanes, underground power lines, sidewalks and more.
- The city received national recognition for the Neighborhood Program and Maplewood Golf Course, was awarded TreeCity USA status, and reduced garbage by 45% through the recycling program.



- The city continues to be successful in encouraging high-quality development—from the planned redevelopment of Quendall Terminals on Lake Washington to the construction of Hawks Landing. Valley Medical Center's \$200 million emergency services tower will soon be opening, and there have been several ribbon cuttings for key employers including Harley Davidson and Uwajimaya. The Seahawks training camp brought 15,000 fans to Renton, and new stores and restaurants continue to open at The Landing.

To view or read the Mayor's budget message and for more information on the budget, please visit rentonwa.gov.

THANKSGIVING A DAY OF SHARING**Thanksgiving dinner to be served at Renton's Senior Activity Center**

For the 15th consecutive year, Thanksgiving Day is celebrated as a day of sharing in Renton as employees from the City of Renton and members from the Rotary Club of Renton serve Thanksgiving dinner at the Renton Senior Activity Center.

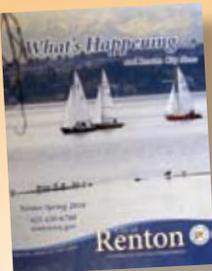
The Renton Senior Activity Center, located at 211 Burnett Avenue North, will be open on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., for senior citizens to enjoy a day of social and recreational activities.

A free holiday meal, sponsored by the Rotary

Club of Renton, will be served at 11:45 a.m. Senior citizens must pick up a free ticket prior to Tuesday, November 24, for their meal reservation.

This annual event draws over 250 senior citizens. Members of the Rotary Club of Renton and City of Renton employees provide approximately 75 volunteers to help cook, serve, clean, and staff recreational activities.

For more information, call 425-430-6633.

**RENTON CITYNEWS
IN NEXT ISSUE OF
"WHAT'S HAPPENING"**

The next issue of the Renton CityNews will be included in the upcoming Winter/Spring edition of "What's Happening," our ever-popular guide to city programs and events.

Be sure to check

out your copy when it arrives. For more information about city news, programs and events visit rentonwa.gov.

 **The City of Renton provides reasonable accommodation upon request.**

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