



2024 Budget Address Transcript

Residents of Edmonds and members of the Edmonds City Council:

I present to you the Proposed 2024 City of Edmonds Budget.

In the last couple of years, our budgets have funded more police officers, modernized and improved the capabilities of the police department, and prioritized building community-oriented policing. Our budgets have created a new human services department and a social worker helping hundreds of Edmonds residents more parks and open spaces and built renewable energy and transportation infrastructure. During COVID our budgets also provided millions in aid to hundreds of small businesses and families.

This 2024 budget supports not only our immediate needs, but also prepares us for our future needs. The recent significant increases in inflation and costs for Fire and EMS services pose new challenges to our city. However, because of our past financial support of our local business, they remain strong, and we continue seeing record sales tax revenues and are predicting another record year at the end of 2023.

I am proud to share with you my proposed balanced budget that properly maintains services like our police, fire, parks, human services, and public works, avoids unnecessary cuts, and leaves our city finances with healthy reserves.

2024 Priorities

Today I want to share with you three areas I am prioritizing in 2024. They are (1) safer places to walk and drive, (2) improving our parks and our natural environment, and (3) continued investments in the Highway 99 corridor.

1) Safe Places to Walk and Drive

We must protect our most vulnerable. Our loved ones should not be hurt or killed for walking to school, traveling to a friend's house, commuting to work, or going for a stroll in the neighborhood. These needless tragedies are preventable. We have already taken some significant steps to address

this. For example, we are installing five school zone speed cameras that will be operational in January. But that does not address the dangers of tens of thousands of cars that pass through our roadways each day and night.

Reducing Speeding and Preventing Injuries

Our Edmonds Police Department Traffic unit reviewed collision data over the last five years and identified six unsafe intersections. At these most dangerous intersections, we are proposing installing cameras to help catch those who recklessly speed through intersections running red lights and issue citations. The costs of this system will be approximately \$180,000 and will pay for itself. Additional revenue from the citations will be used for traffic safety improvements throughout Edmonds. Surrounding cities have similar cameras in place and support their effectiveness.

Prioritizing Pedestrian Safety

As we enter fall and winter, the days are not only shorter but visibility in dark and stormy weather impacts safe travel for our most vulnerable. I am proposing increasing our annual traffic calming program from \$33,000 to \$100,000 out of the General Fund. This is part of a larger update and revamping of the program so more neighborhoods that are impacted by speeding will receive new traffic calming devices to help reduce vehicle speeds and enhance pedestrian safety. Additionally, I am proposing \$80,000 for continued pedestrian safety improvements throughout the city that include pedestrian activated lights at crosswalks called rapid flashing beacons and flashing LED lights at stop signs.

All of this will help make drivers more aware of our most vulnerable, especially our children and seniors.

Grants Manager

One of the most requested city items is building more sidewalks. They are important for pedestrian safety but are extremely costly, they can cost up to a \$1 million dollars a block. To help fund more sidewalks and other city infrastructure we are proposing a new grants manager position.

There are significant amounts of state and federal grants coming out of the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. So much so that many cities have specialized staff who know how to navigate these massive bureaucracies with countless rules and requirements and qualify cities for these needed grants. This person's sole job is to bring money to the city. They will assist multiple city departments including parks and public works. This position will cost approximately \$183,000 for salary and benefits.

2) Improving our Parks and Green Spaces

Our parks are being used more than ever before. Kids playing soccer at night on Civic Field rain or shine. And good luck finding an available pickleball court!

Mathay Ballinger Park

This park is currently being upgraded with a permanent restroom, shelter with picnic tables and an ADA accessible path that connects the playground with the Interurban Trail. The restroom will be constructed and installed in 2024. This work is funded with Real Estate Excise Tax funds and will cost approximately \$271,000.

Improving Water Quality of Edmonds Marsh

At the same time some of our public lands not only provide recreation and enjoyment but serve a critical role in protecting our natural environment like our Marsh and streams.

Our city staff is currently working with WSDOT to arrange the purchase of the remaining section of the Marsh. The goal is to restore the Marsh so that it is protected and functions as nature intended, serve as a sponge absorbing floodwaters and filtering stormwater before it enters the Puget Sound as well as providing a habitat for salmon and other critical wildlife. The city currently owns the other half of the Marsh. One significant harmful impact to Edmonds Marsh is polluted stormwater coming from State Route 104. We are proposing installing filters along the east and west side catch basins. These filters will help reduce harmful chemicals found in tires that cause mortality in salmon. This project will cost approximately \$876,000 and be primarily funded with state grants.

Restoring Perrinville Creek

With the increasing impacts of development and extreme weather due to climate change, we are seeing a significant increase in flooding, erosion, debris, and significant barriers for salmon to travel through. To help address this, we are proposing starting a new project to specifically restore first the lower portion of Perrinville Creek by restoring the storm water capacity of the creek and improve the environmental health of the creek to support fish habitat. This project will include replacing the culvert under BNSF railroad with a fish-friendly culvert or bridge that will also support increased stormwater. It will also build structures that mimic natural channel performance for fish habitat and stormwater capacity. The design costs will be approximately \$730,000 and funded with Stormwater funds.

Preparing for an Extreme Climate - Climate Action Manager

Extreme weather is here. Dangers from wildfires, drought, icy roads, flooding are not some other generations or someone else's problems. Our 2023 Climate Action Plan lays out the actions we must all take to protect us now and for future generations. Our city departments are impacted and have an

impact on our climate. More importantly our residents can have the biggest impact in reducing harmful carbon emissions and preparing for climate change impacts.

We are proposing funding a new Climate Action Manager position that would be responsible for completing the actions in the 2023 Climate Action Plan and coordinating the city's climate-related policies and strategies. They would coordinate climate action efforts across multiple city departments and work collaboratively with community groups, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders. Progress would be charted through an online dashboard and annual progress reports. This position will cost approximately \$143,000 for salary and benefits.

3) Highway 99 Revitalization

This year we completed the conversion of the center two-way left turn lane to a landscaped raised median. This has improved safety along the entire corridor which has approximately 35,000 vehicles a day traveling down it. The new HAWK signal will provide a safer pedestrian crossing between the existing traffic signals at 238th St and 228th St. The new Edmonds signs establish our corridor's distinct identity and together all these recent improvements are improving the beautification and making the area a more welcoming environment.

For 2024, we are beginning the next stages of this ongoing project. Stage 3, which is from 244th St to 238 St SW on Highway 99, will include wider sidewalks, planters to separate sidewalks from traffic lanes, enhanced street lighting and utility improvements. The design and right of way phase is projected to cost \$1.3 million and is funded by state grants. Stage 4, which is from 224th St to 220th St SW on Highway 99, will have similar improvements and will also cost \$1.3 million, primarily funded with federal and state grants.

Beyond the 2024 Budget - Fire and EMS Services

Nothing is more important than protecting your health and safety. The City has had a contract for many years with South County Fire for Paramedic/EMS and Fire Services. Unfortunately, the cost of these fire services is increasing at an unsustainable rate. In the last two years, it has increased approximately \$4 million. We brought this to the attention of the City Council but a majority of them have refused to take action. Without Council action soon, we risk losing fire and emergency medical services to our community. It is my belief that you, the voters, should have a say on this critical lifesaving service. I wanted to alert our residents to this important issue and remain hopeful Council will start working on this in the coming months.

Conclusion

In spite of rising costs, our community continues to support one another. It maintains our wonderful quality of life in Edmonds as well as protects our most vulnerable residents. This budget improves pedestrian and traffic safety for those who live and visit our city, supports our wonderful parks, protects our natural environment, and continues to invest in our underserved neighborhoods. It addresses the day-to-day challenges facing us as well as lays the groundwork for a sustainable and vibrant future.

Thank you.