

City Council

Department Description

Columbus City Council is the chief policy-making arm of city government, empowered by City Charter to exercise legislative control over city expenditures. Citizens elect the seven-member council at-large to four-year terms of office. Primary responsibilities include the adoption of the annual operating and capital budgets, authorizing certain contracts, and enacting amendments to the Columbus City Code. In addition to fiscal control and regulatory authority, Council establishes land use policy through its zoning powers.

The Council works closely with the administrative branch of city government in the formation of policy, including work force and economic development initiatives, tax incentives, annexation and land use, and efforts to serve Columbus families. As well, City Council initiates and facilitates on-going cooperative efforts with other governments, the business community, and other institutions to ensure a safe environment and a high quality of life for all Columbus citizens.

Legislative research office (LRO activities include public policy analyses, including the budget and city programming, public information efforts, and research and application efforts to reduce operating costs, both on a citywide basis and within the offices of City Council and the City Clerk.

Legislative aides and the LRO provide Council members advice and information regarding budgetary, neighborhood, community, and economic development matters.

Council appoints the City Clerk, who maintains the journal of Council activity, codifying general ordinances and maintaining custody of deeds, abstracts, and titles owned by the city. Council also appoints the City Treasurer, whose duties include the investment of all city funds.

Department Mission

Members of the staff of Columbus City Council believe our first priority is to provide high quality, responsive service to the people of Columbus. We strive to demonstrate the utmost respect for our citizens and for each other in a workplace that highly values teamwork, personal integrity, and competence. Our overriding goal is to always do our best for the citizens of the City of Columbus.

Strategic Priorities for 2008

City Council's 2008 strategic priorities will be met by its continued focus on three areas: working to better serve the needs of all Columbus families, including keeping public safety as the city's top priority; job creation efforts through fostering effective partnerships; and continued belt tightening to maintain fiscal health.

- Council believes that creating and maintaining jobs is essential to a vibrant city. Council will continue to work with the administration to develop innovative collaborations to incentivize significant private investment in what traditionally would have been primarily publicly funded projects. Prime examples include ongoing development of the State Route 315 Research and Technology Corridor, revitalization of the Northland corridor, and continued investment in the downtown at the RiverSouth district. Project partners include the Ohio State University, Battelle, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, and Tech Columbus, among others. The implementation of a new growth policy that calls on developers and suburbs to share in the cost of needed infrastructure and services such as roads and safety services exemplifies this new approach, commonly called "sustainable growth." These efforts will continue and be expanded elsewhere.
- Other key points of an overall job creation strategy include working to keep homegrown talent through investments that support entrepreneurial startups; making targeted capital investments to bring idle properties back into production; and providing seed money for targeted economic development initiatives such as traffic studies and retail studies, to improve job growth prospects.
- To enhance citizen safety, in addition to working with the administration to better equip police officers and firefighters, Council has funded expansions of the Community Crime Patrol (citizen patrollers who supplement police efforts) in 2006 and 2007. Expanded duties include assisting in code enforcement matters.
- Council continues to identify and implement better business practices to make government more effective and accessible to the public. Council implemented electronic production of legislation in 2003, including in-house publication and online distribution of the city bulletin and meeting agendas. In addition to saving at least \$150,000 annually, web-based access to the bulletin, agendas and city budget documents dramatically increases the public's ability to monitor and comment on city government activity.
- Council continues to work with the administration to secure downtown stability through the creation of greater downtown and neighborhood housing opportunities. City assistance may include various incentives for developers, such as tax abatements or targeted use of city capital monies to leverage private investments.
- Council will also continue working with the administration to encourage other political jurisdictions to practice "responsible development" within the Big Darby watershed. To protect this important natural resource, Council imposed a moratorium on city sewer and water line extensions in the watershed through June 2006. This allowed for completion of a comprehensive, intergovernmental planning accord (the Big Darby Accord Watershed Master Plan) which Columbus approved in July 2006 along with other jurisdictions. The accord allows for the

exercise of personal property rights while being sensitive to preservation and environmental protection objectives.

- The city's most vulnerable citizens will continue to receive Council attention as it works with community advocates such as the Columbus Medical Association, the United Way, the Community Shelter Board, the Neighborhood Health Center System, and the YWCA. These organizations and others bring needed social services and accessible health care to low-income families and populations within the community. To bring added focus and more effective response to homelessness, Council worked with the administration in 2007 to create an Office of Homeless Advocacy.

2008 Budget Notes

- The recommended general fund budget for City Council includes continuation of funding for contracts with the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce, and Experience Columbus.
- An internship program with the John Glenn School of Public Affairs in the amount of \$64,092 will provide internship opportunities for graduate students interested in careers in municipal government.

Budget and Program Summary

CITY COUNCIL FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
DIVISION SUMMARY	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Original Appropriation	2007 Estimated Expenditures	2008 Proposed
City Council	\$ 11,646,855	\$ 12,915,177	\$ 12,480,732	\$ 12,767,988	\$ 13,481,434
TOTAL	\$ 11,646,855	\$ 12,915,177	\$ 12,480,732	\$ 12,767,988	\$ 13,481,434

NOTE: For the general fund, 2008 budget figures, unlike in preceding years, do not include technology expenditures, which are budgeted in Finance and Management. For an adjusted historical comparison, see page 26-9.

DIVISION SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
CITY COUNCIL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Original Appropriation	2007 Estimated Expenditures	2008 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 2,343,939	\$ 2,594,570	\$ 2,941,678	\$ 2,634,025	\$ 2,958,270
Materials & Supplies	66,400	19,219	50,000	50,000	42,000
Services	1,881,661	1,784,359	1,089,054	1,083,963	901,164
TOTAL	\$ 4,292,000	\$ 4,398,148	\$ 4,080,732	\$ 3,767,988	\$ 3,901,434
CITY COUNCIL HOTEL/MOTEL EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Original Appropriation	2007 Estimated Expenditures	2008 Proposed
Services	\$ 7,249,555	\$ 7,972,329	\$ 8,400,000	\$ 9,000,000	\$ 9,580,000
Transfers	105,300	544,700	-	-	-
TOTAL	\$ 7,354,855	\$ 8,517,029	\$ 8,400,000	\$ 9,000,000	\$ 9,580,000

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY FUND					
FUND SUMMARY	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Original Appropriation	2007 Estimated Expenditures	2008 Proposed
General	\$ 4,292,000	\$ 4,398,148	\$ 4,080,732	\$ 3,767,988	\$ 3,901,434
Hotel/Motel Tax	7,354,855	8,517,029	8,400,000	9,000,000	9,580,000
TOTAL	\$ 11,646,855	\$ 12,915,177	\$ 12,480,732	\$ 12,767,988	\$ 13,481,434

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SUMMARY					
DIVISION	FT/PT*	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Authorized	2008 Authorized
City Council	FT	33	31	38	38
	PT	3	1	1	1
TOTAL		36	32	39	39

*FT=Full-Time PT=Part-Time

**2008 Operating Budget
City Council**

Program	Mission	Financial History by Program				Personnel by Program			
		2005 Budget	2006 Budget	2007 Budget	2008 Proposed	2005 FTEs	2006 FTEs	2007 FTEs	2008 FTEs
Administration	To approve all appropriations and laws for Columbus, and to provide a public forum for the discussion of issues by the citizenry.	\$4,553,720	\$4,734,852	\$4,080,732	\$3,901,434	33	35	34	36
Hotel/Motel Tax	To provide support for Experience Columbus and for expanding cultural services.	7,019,944	8,405,000	8,400,000	9,580,000	-	-	-	-
		\$11,573,664	\$13,139,852	\$12,480,732	\$13,481,434	33	35	34	36

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Some program data will not match department summary data due to differences in data being reported (i.e., budgeted versus actual). This is compounded in cases of departmental reorganizations during the timeframe.

