

CITY OF STEVENSON, WASHINGTON
2026 BUDGET DOCUMENT

(Draft Layout for Council and Public Review)

1. MESSAGE FROM THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Stevenson City Council and Community Members,

It is my honor to present the City of Stevenson's proposed 2026 Budget — a comprehensive financial plan designed to sustain essential services, invest in our infrastructure, and maintain the City's long-term financial health. This document represents months of analysis and collaboration between staff, leadership, and partners. It reflects our shared priorities as a community and a continuing commitment to transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility.

In recent years, Stevenson has made significant strides in addressing complex infrastructure challenges while strengthening internal operations and improving service delivery. The 2026 Budget continues that momentum. It provides a framework to stabilize our financial base after several years of major investments and staff transitions. Our focus this year is on reinforcing the City's core services — ensuring that we meet community needs efficiently while maintaining a sustainable financial outlook.

The proposed budget takes a measured, conservative approach to forecasting revenues while balancing necessary expenditures for public safety, utilities, and capital improvements. It includes ongoing investments in technology, permitting, and staff training that will improve customer service and operational efficiency. We have also maintained healthy reserve balances to safeguard against economic uncertainty and to prepare for future opportunities.

As we look ahead, our priorities are clear: maintain financial stability, invest in resilient infrastructure, support housing and economic growth, and strengthen communication with residents and businesses. Each of these goals is rooted in our vision of Stevenson as a thriving, welcoming community that balances progress with preservation.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Mayor, City Council, department directors, and City staff for their dedication and partnership in this process. Together, we are building a stronger foundation for Stevenson's future.



Wesley Wootten

City Administrator

1A. ABOUT STEVENSON

Nestled along the Columbia River Gorge, the City of Stevenson serves as the county seat of Skamania County and the gateway to one of the most scenic areas in the Pacific Northwest. Originally founded in the late 1800s and incorporated in 1908, Stevenson's history is rooted in its early role as a riverfront community built around transportation, trade, and timber. Today, the City continues to blend its small-town character with regional tourism and outdoor recreation, offering residents and visitors alike a vibrant downtown, strong community spirit, and unparalleled access to nature.

With a population of just over 1,600, Stevenson provides essential municipal services including water and sewer utilities, public works maintenance, planning and development, and partnerships for public safety. The City's efforts to modernize operations and plan for long-term growth continue to reflect the values of stewardship, collaboration, and transparency.



2. HOW TO READ THIS BUDGET

This document is designed to be informative and approachable for all readers — whether you're a resident, business owner, or policymaker.

Key Terms:

- *Fund*: A separate account for a specific purpose (e.g., General Fund, Street Fund).
- *Reserve*: Savings set aside for emergencies or future projects.
- *Transfer*: Money moved between funds for shared costs or capital projects.
- *Capital Project*: A major investment in buildings, infrastructure, or equipment that has a multi-year useful life.
- *Debt Service*: Payments on loans or bonds that fund major capital projects.

- *Operating Expense*: Day-to-day costs of running city departments, including personnel and supplies.
 - *Revenue*: Any money the City receives, such as taxes, utility payments, grants, or fees.
 - *Expenditure*: Any money the City spends to provide services, pay debt, or fund projects.
 - *Enterprise Fund*: A fund that operates like a business, supported by fees instead of taxes (e.g., Water/Sewer Fund).
 - *Intergovernmental Revenue*: Funding received from other government agencies, such as the state or county.
 - *Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)*: An annual increase in employee wages based on inflation.
 - *Fiscal Year (FY)*: The 12-month accounting period used for the City budget (January 1–December 31).
 - *BARS Code*: The Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting System used by Washington cities to ensure uniform financial reporting.
 - *Levy*: The total amount of property tax that the City collects in a given year.
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3. OVERVIEW OF CITY FINANCES

The City's 2026 budget continues all core services, funds ongoing capital improvements, and maintains reserves consistent with City financial policy. The budget reflects conservative revenue estimates and disciplined spending.

Financial Snapshot

- **Total Revenues:** \$14,048,281
- **Total Expenditures:** \$14,048,281
- **Debt Outstanding:** \$12,326,761

Revenues are primarily generated through property and sales taxes, utility rates, state and federal grants, and fees for permits or services. Expenditures are grouped into personnel costs, operations and maintenance, capital investments, and debt service.

5 YEAR BUDGET COMPARISON

City Of Stevenson

Account	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2025 Appropriated	2026 Appropriated
001 General Expense Fund	2,730,699.74	3,204,959.24	3,261,161.39	2,795,635.67	3,034,442.84	2,993,999.53
010 General Reserve Fund	335,258.75	344,042.65	354,785.42	362,411.50	344,042.65	354,785.42
020 General Fire Fund	1,650,586.13	1,902,519.12	1,989,737.01	2,458,299.56	2,339,328.12	2,588,356.88
030 ARPA	447,353.00	298,313.00	298,313.00			
100 Street Fund	906,111.12	832,923.59	818,487.06	567,144.21	769,671.36	748,899.70
103 Tourism Promo & Develop Fund	1,488,867.25	1,843,175.38	2,155,817.31	1,822,649.31	1,538,674.99	1,809,244.87
105 Affordable Housing Fund	12,435.11	17,455.62	22,250.75	24,649.08	27,455.62	32,250.75
107 HEALing SCARS Fund	10,190.57	10,246.39	10,436.64	10,616.01	10,246.39	10,436.64
300 Capital Improvement Fund	210,190.20	265,030.70	320,487.60	318,262.95	268,809.70	326,406.26
309 Russell Ave	24,820.09					
311 First Street	28,951.71		618,071.18	-195,176.49		-385,304.60
312 Columbia Ave	54,382.75	62,706.87				
313 Park Plaza Fund		3,618.21	118,551.04			
314 Lasher Street Improv. Fund			1,393.90	36,547.30	450,000.00	412,250.16
400 Water/Sewer Fund	4,788,302.32	4,491,124.66	4,513,522.56	4,564,974.91	3,815,562.39	4,495,816.43
401 Water Short Lived Asset Reserve						75,000.00
406 Wastewater Short Lived Asset Res. Fund	65,337.00	87,116.00	108,895.00	130,674.00	130,674.00	152,453.00
408 Wastewater Debt Reserve Fund	61,191.00	61,191.00	61,191.00	61,191.00	61,191.00	61,191.00
410 Wastewater System Upgrades	4,912,710.48	6,967,725.58	3,549,785.06	-308,746.56	428,184.50	
415 Cascade Avenue Utility Improvements			28,647.00	14,006.18	2,073,317.00	
420 Cascade Avenue Mitigation Fund		19,550.00	19,550.00	19,550.00	19,550.00	19,550.00
500 Equipment Service Fund	403,541.21	371,283.18	856,830.59	260,013.25	279,143.07	352,945.17
630 Stevenson Municipal Court	8,247.43	4,668.54	5,211.29	2,371.18		
	18,139,175.86	20,787,649.73	19,113,124.80	12,945,073.06	15,590,293.63	14,048,281.21
001 General Expense Fund	1,190,184.40	1,622,523.39	1,344,092.63	1,378,761.81	3,080,443.03	2,993,999.54
010 General Reserve Fund					344,042.65	354,785.42
020 General Fire Fund				151,340.53	2,339,328.12	2,588,356.88
030 ARPA	149,040.00		298,313.00			
100 Street Fund	830,051.37	751,036.82	814,664.45	385,759.36	719,671.36	748,899.70
103 Tourism Promo & Develop Fund	384,260.46	459,075.37	714,352.44	270,913.44	1,559,632.55	1,809,244.87
105 Affordable Housing Fund					27,455.62	32,250.75
107 HEALing SCARS Fund					10,246.39	10,436.64
300 Capital Improvement Fund			34,081.34		268,809.70	326,406.26
309 Russell Ave	24,820.09					
311 First Street	28,951.71		1,003,375.78	83,249.64		-385,304.60
312 Columbia Ave	117,670.23	82,326.87				
313 Park Plaza Fund		86,230.28	118,551.04			
314 Lasher Street Improv. Fund			39,143.74	111,747.81	450,000.00	412,250.16
400 Water/Sewer Fund	2,829,339.09	2,585,291.55	2,246,770.74	1,808,954.49	3,815,562.39	4,495,816.43
401 Water Short Lived Asset Reserve						75,000.00
406 Wastewater Short Lived Asset Res. Fund					130,674.00	152,453.00
408 Wastewater Debt Reserve Fund					61,191.00	61,191.00
410 Wastewater System Upgrades	6,091,890.19	7,727,485.91	4,905,438.16	572,283.40	428,184.50	

5 YEAR BUDGET COMPARISON

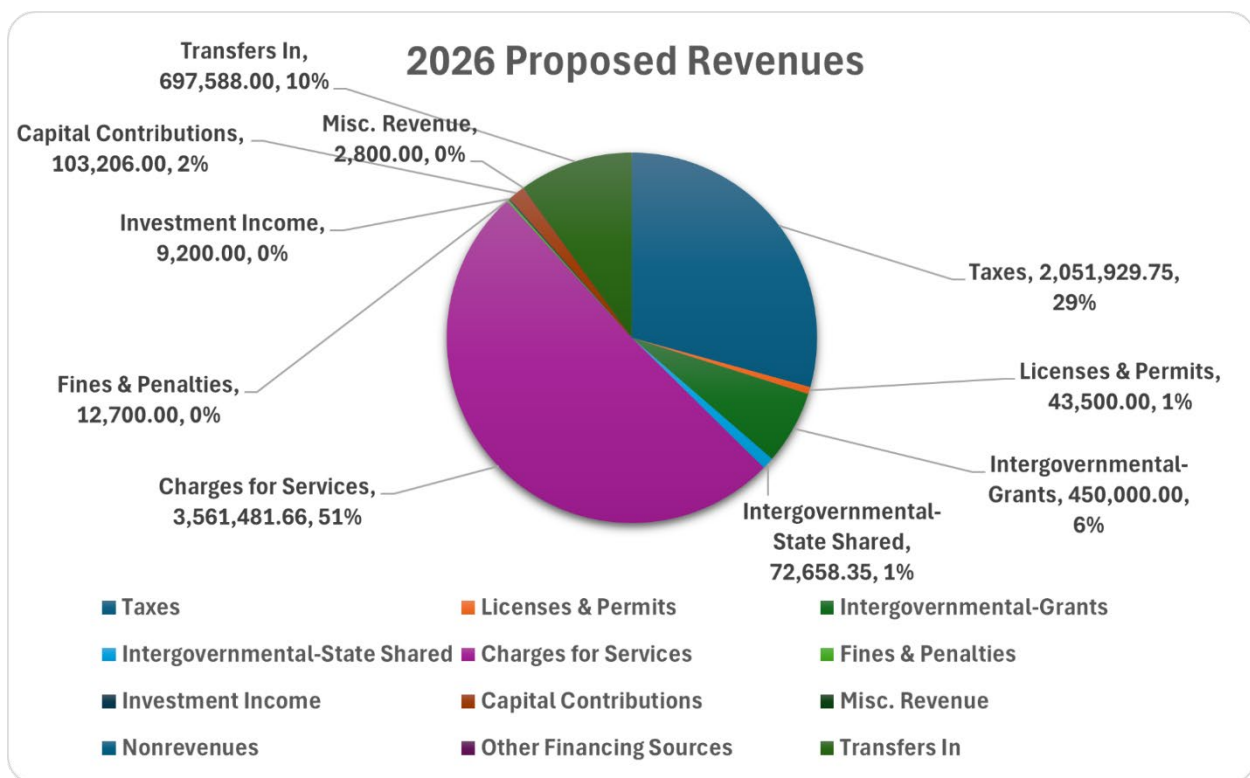
City Of Stevenson

Account	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2025 Appropriated	2026 Appropriated
415 Cascade Avenue Utility Improvements			77,647.30	96,512.41	2,073,317.00	
420 Cascade Avenue Mitigation Fund					19,550.00	19,550.00
500 Equipment Service Fund	245,974.67	286,856.69	754,509.44	162,873.95	279,143.07	352,945.17
630 Stevenson Municipal Court	8,247.43	4,668.54	5,211.29	1,774.05		
	11,900,429.64	13,605,495.42	12,356,151.35	5,024,170.89	15,607,251.38	14,048,281.22
FUNDS GAIN/LOSS:	6,238,746.22	7,182,154.31	6,756,973.45	7,920,902.17	-16,957.75	-0.01

4. REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES AT A GLANCE

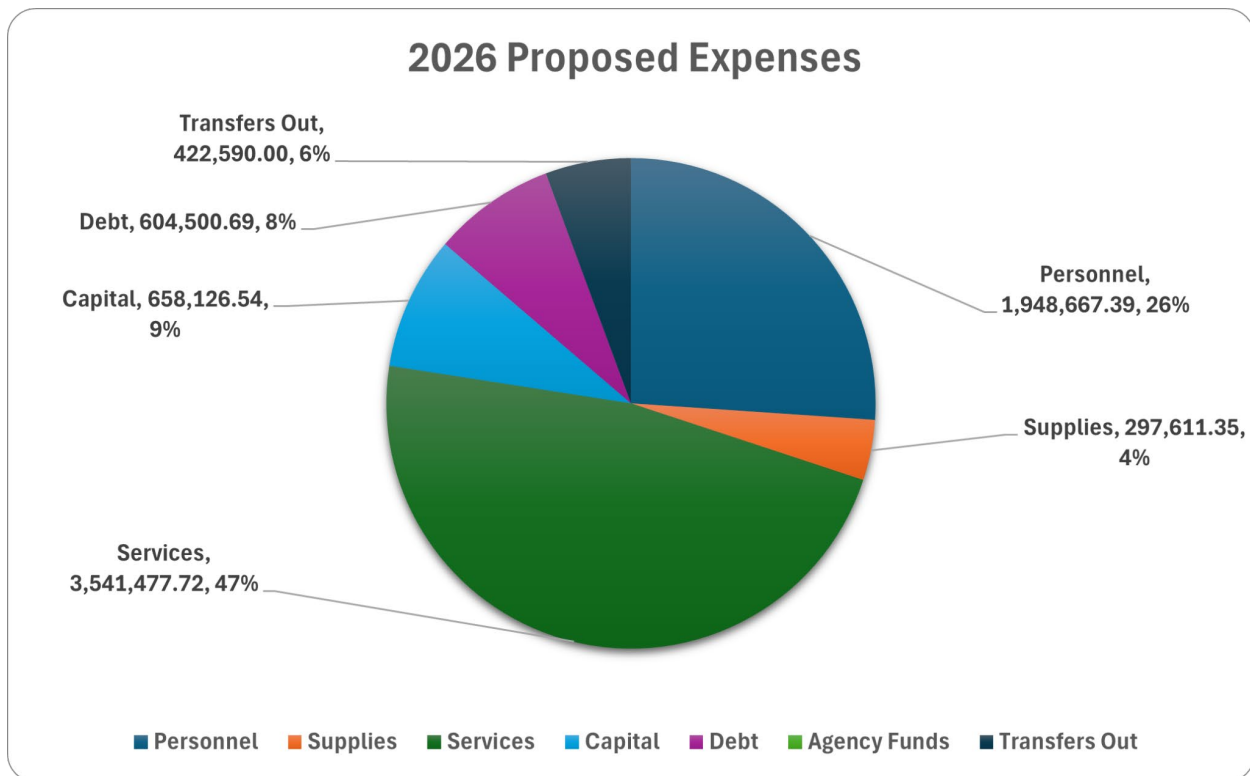
Where the Money Comes From

- **Taxes (Property & Sales):** The largest share of General Fund revenue. Property taxes are limited by state law to a 1% annual increase, plus new construction.
- **Utility Revenues:** Collected from water and sewer services.
- **Intergovernmental Revenues:** Shared state taxes and grants for capital projects.
- **Charges for Services:** Fees for permits, inspections, and other services.



How the Money is Spent

- **Personnel Costs:** Wages and benefits for City staff.
- **Operations & Maintenance:** Day-to-day costs of providing services.
- **Capital Projects:** One-time investments in infrastructure.
- **Debt Service:** Payments on long-term loans.



The City strives to maintain a balance between investing in improvements and keeping operational spending sustainable.

5. MAJOR FUNDS

Each City fund functions like its own checking account with dedicated revenues and expenditures. Below is a summary of the City's primary operating and capital funds.

General Fund

Supports the City's administrative operations, law enforcement contract, planning, building, and parks. Major revenue sources include property and sales tax.

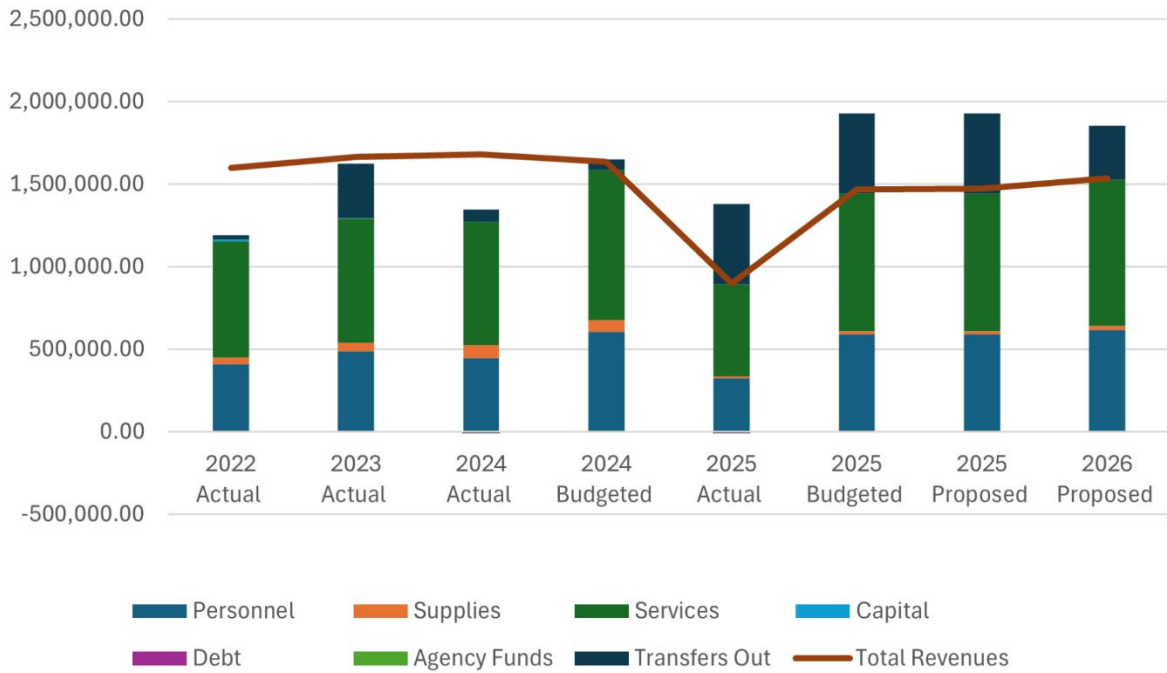
Highlights:

- Stable revenue growth expected.
- Continued support for planning and permitting modernization.
- Healthy reserve balance maintained above the 10% target.

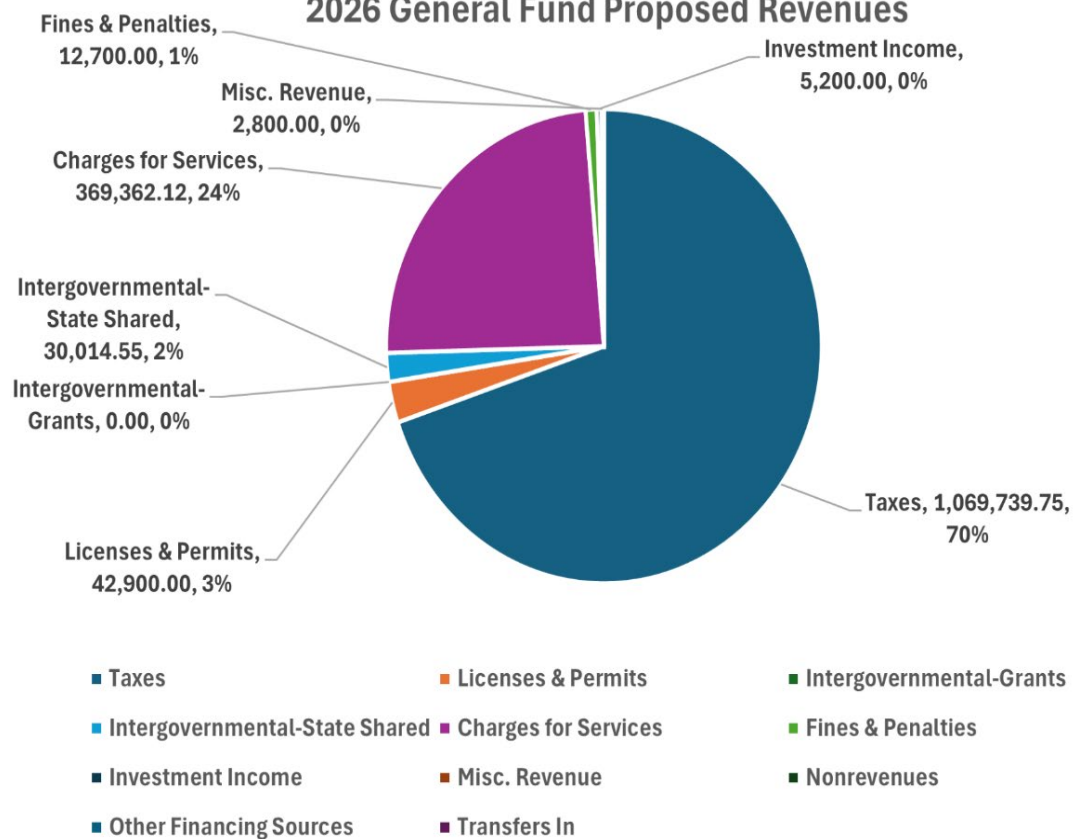
Total Revenue: \$1,532,716.42

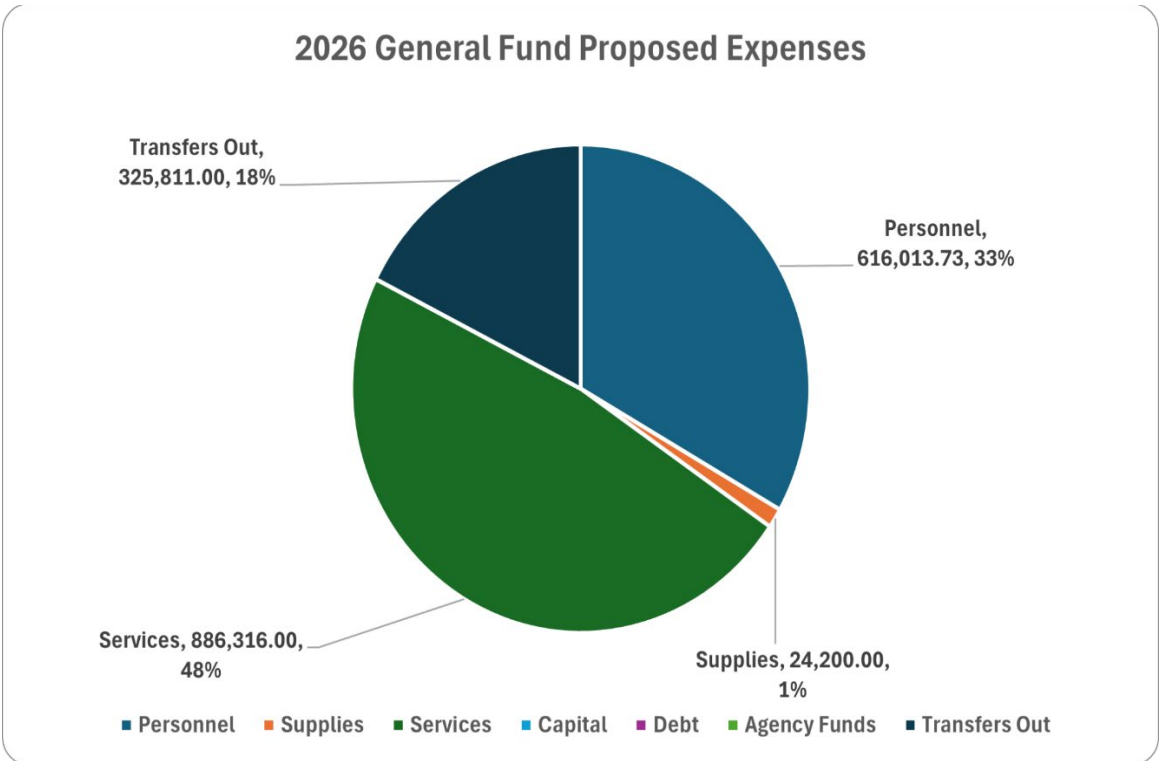
Total Expenses: \$1,852,340.73

General Fund



2026 General Fund Proposed Revenues



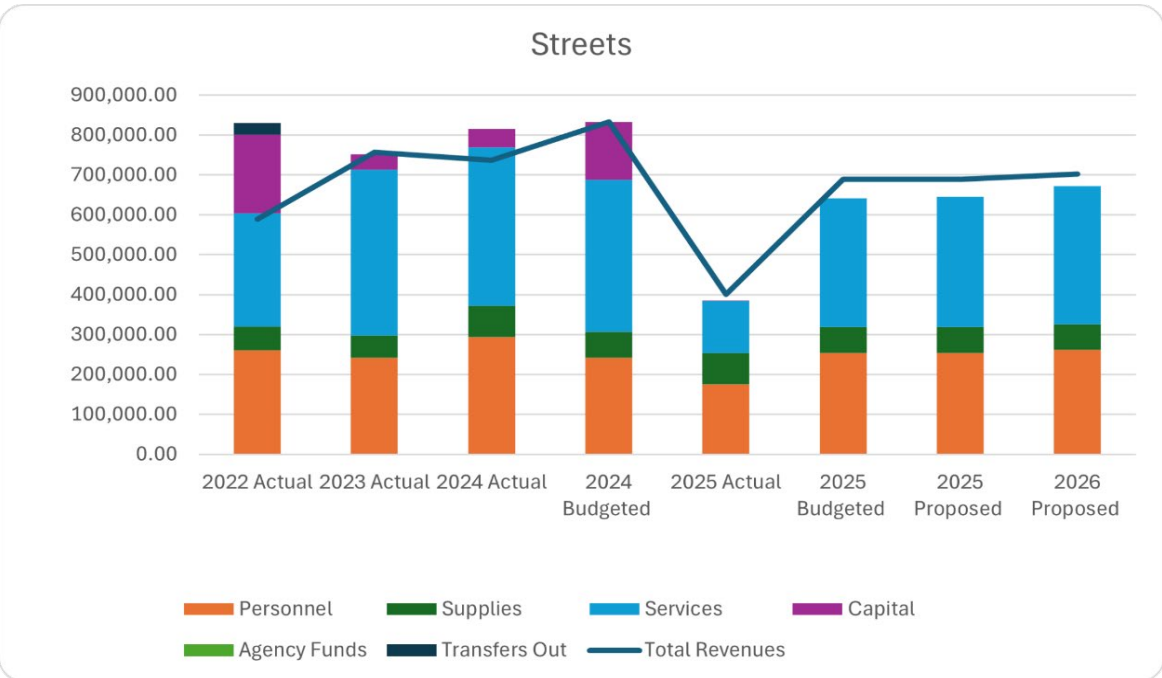


Street Fund

Pays for street maintenance, snow removal, chip sealing, and stormwater systems. Funded by gas tax, local sales tax, and interfund transfers.

Total Revenue: \$702,243.80

Total Expenses: \$671,734.05



Tourism Promotion Fund

Supports marketing, festivals, and tourism infrastructure funded by the 4% lodging tax. Allocations are made annually based on recommendations from the Tourism Advisory Committee.

Total Revenue: \$487,190.00

Total Expenses: \$609,773.00



Water/Sewer Utility Fund

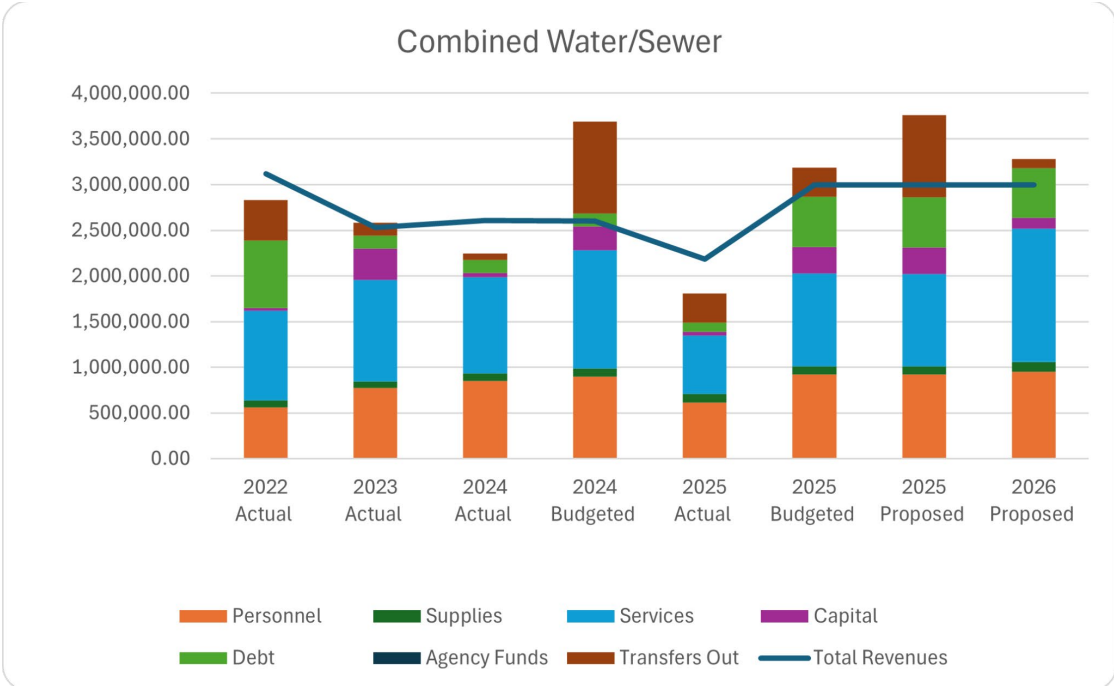
Operates as an enterprise fund, meaning it is supported by user rates rather than taxes. Rates were last adjusted in 2024 to ensure full cost recovery and capital replacement.

Highlights:

- Continued loan repayment for the wastewater plant.
- Funding for preventative maintenance and equipment replacement.

Total Revenue: \$2,995,225.54

Total Expenses: \$3,278,412.83

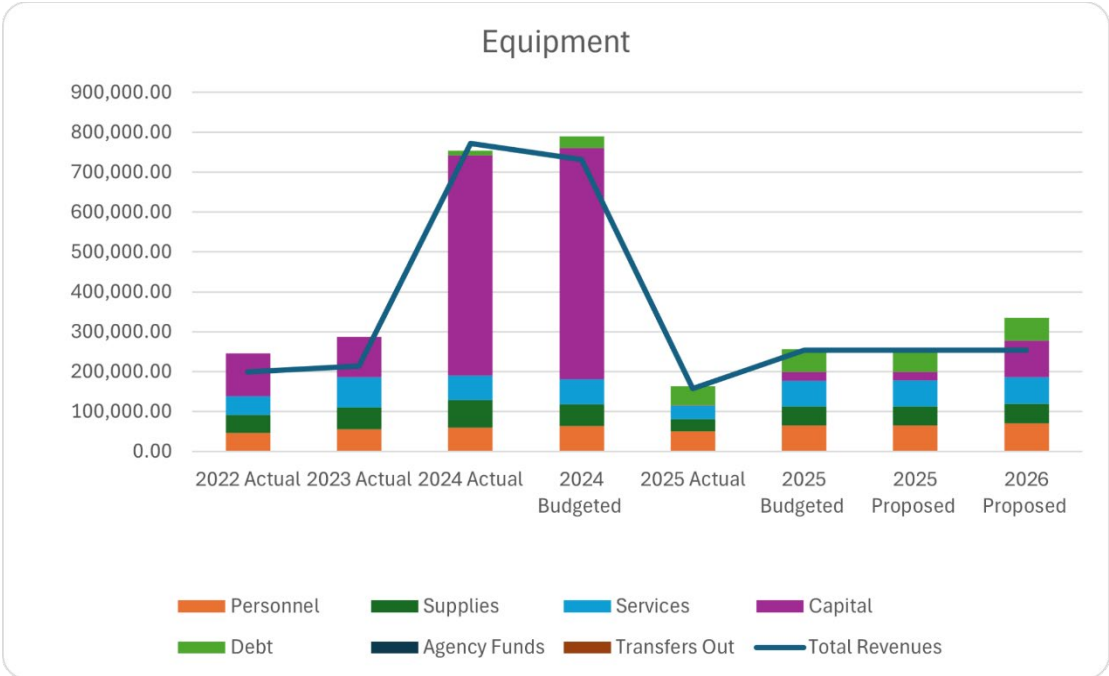


Equipment Service Fund

Provides for maintenance and replacement of City vehicles and equipment. Costs are charged back to departments based on usage.

Total Revenue: \$254,100.00

Total Expenses: \$335,636.20



6. CAPITAL & DEBT

The City continues to invest in projects that improve safety, reliability, and quality of life.

Capital Improvements

Major projects planned for 2026 include:

- Cascade Avenue Utility Upgrades
 - Sewer Line Replacement
 - Downtown Streetscape Enhancements
 - Water Plant Infrastructure Maintenance
- (See full details in Appendix C.)

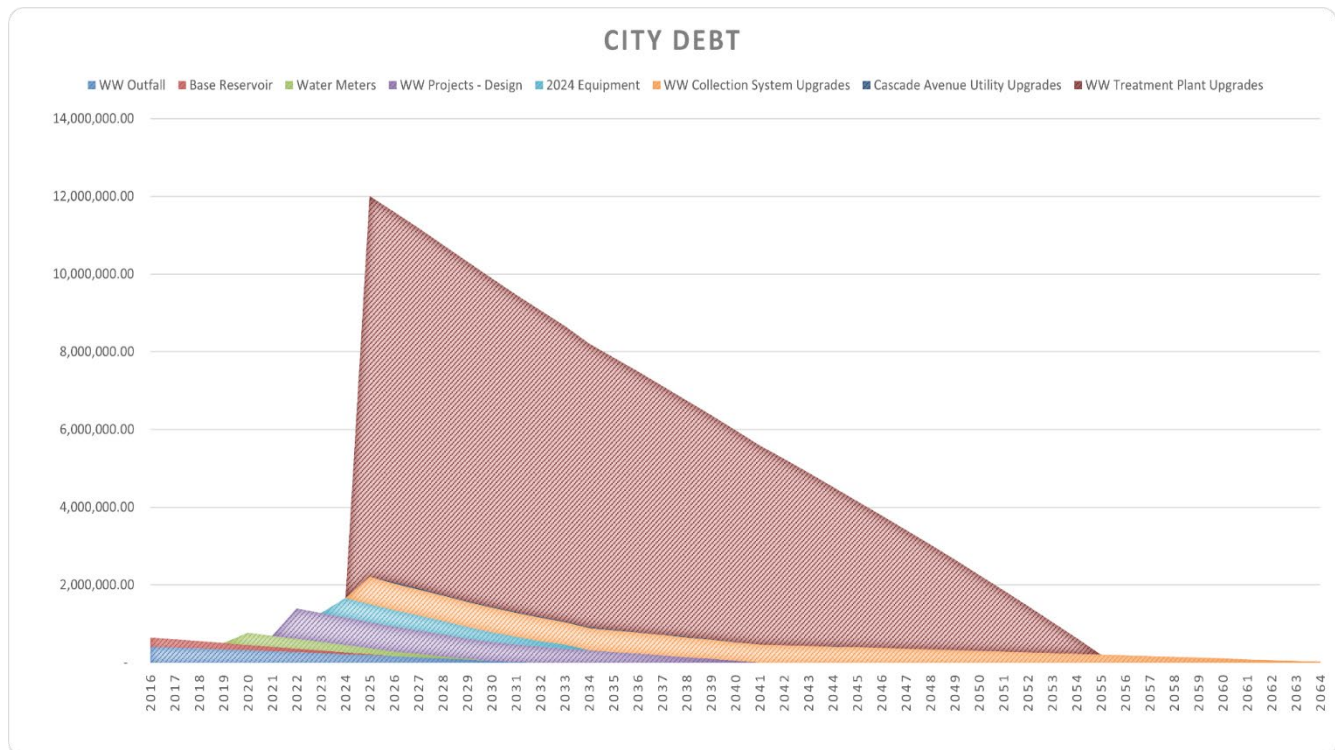
Debt Overview

The City carries long-term debt primarily for utility infrastructure. Debt levels remain within state limits and are supported by utility revenues.

Total Outstanding Debt: $\approx$ \$12.33 million

Estimated Lifetime Interest to Be Paid: $\approx$ \$3.5–\$4 million (primarily from the DOE & USDA loans)

Estimated Annual Debt Service: $\approx$ \$550,000–\$600,000 per year



(See Appendix D for detailed schedules.)

7. LOOKING AHEAD

The 2026 budget supports several strategic priorities identified by the City Council, including:

1. **Financial Stability:** Maintain reserves and continue long-term planning for sustainable staffing and infrastructure funding.
 2. **Infrastructure Resilience:** Prioritize deferred maintenance and system upgrades in water, sewer, and transportation.
 3. **Community Development:** Support housing readiness, code updates, and downtown revitalization efforts.
 4. **Transparency and Communication:** Continue improving public communication on City finances and projects.
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8. APPENDICES

[Appendix A: Salary Schedule](#)

Summary of pay ranges for all City positions.

[Appendix B: Utility Rates](#)

Current water and sewer rates, connection fees, and right-of-way permit charges.

[Appendix C: Capital Improvement Plan](#)

Six-year plan outlining priority infrastructure projects.

[Appendix D: Debt Schedule](#)

Detailed list of loans, repayment schedules, and interest rates.