



# 2027 BUDGET BRIEFING

Common Council  
John Weidl, City Manager  
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October 2026

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## BUDGET TIMELINE

- *10/6/2026 – DRAFT BUDGET/HIGHLIGHTS PRESENTATION*
- 10/12/2026 – FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (1 OF 4)
  - GENERAL ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC WORKS, FIRE/EMS, UTILITIES
- 10/14/2026 – FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (2 OF 4)
  - LIBRARY, MEDIA SERVICES, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GENERAL FUND, DEBT SERVICE, RIDE SHARE
- 10/19/2026 – FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (3 OF 4)
  - POLICE, PARKS & RECREATION, FACILITIES

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## BUDGET TIMELINE

- 10/20/2026—CITY MANAGER'S DRAFT BUDGET PRESENTATION
- 10/27/2026—FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (4 OF 4)
  - LAKES, CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, TAX LEVY
- 11/6/2026 – FORMAL PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET
- 11/17/2026 – BUDGET HEARING AND FORMAL ADOPTION

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## BUDGET THEMES

- Maintain Quality Services
- Strengthening Public Safety Capacity
- Improving Housing Affordability & Neighborhood Stability
- Investing in Infrastructure & Long-Term Planning
- Supporting Workforce & Operational Efficiency
- Expanding Tax Base to Stabilize the Mill Rate

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## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- Housing stock
  - Owner-occupied: 32%
  - Student rentals (targeted or likely): 47%
  - Senior, assisted living & subsidized: 12.5%
  - Market-rate rentals: 9%
- Large student population
- Lower equalized value per capita than peer communities
- High service demand relative to taxable value
- Strong cultural, educational and recreational assets

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## FINANCIAL OUTLOOK (HIGH-LEVEL)

- \$78,517 increase of Shared Revenue
- Maintenance year for property assessments
- Net New Construction
  - Walworth - \$8,509,500 or 0.889%
  - Jefferson - \$11,033,400 or 7.617%
- Equalized Value
  - Walworth – \$60,899,000 or 6%; Total EV \$1,018,101,400
  - Jefferson - \$14,094,700 or 10% increase; Total EV \$158,948,900
  - Whitewater's combined EV: \$1,177,050,300
- Levy increase (NNC 1.773%): \$105,796

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## FINANCIAL OUTLOOK (HIGH-LEVEL)

- 3% Wage Allowances; 2.25% effective rate
- Health Insurance; Budgeting 15%
- Library – Increased appropriation of \$55,000 plus \$105,000 in gap funding
- Increased reliance on General Fund transfers
- Grants, redevelopment and growth can offset pressures
- Tax base expansion remains essential to long-term stabilization

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## KEY BUDGET GOALS

- Sustain essential services without compromising quality
- Aim to minimize the impact on taxpayers
- Support public safety investments from the referendum
- Strengthen economic development and commercial growth
- Advance housing initiatives to improve affordability
- Leverage grants to reduce levy dependence
- Improve efficiency through technology, shared services and streamlined operations where possible

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## KEY CHALLENGES (HIGH-LEVEL)

- Aging infrastructure and deferred capital needs
- Recruitment and retention pressure
- Levy constraints
- Rising costs in public safety and essential operations
- Affordability concerns among homeowners
- Intergovernmental and external pressures
- Rising fuel costs and interest rates

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## WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO LOWER PROPERTY TAXES?

Average \$300,000 home pays about \$2,133 per year to the City (\$7.11 per \$1,000).

To lower that bill by \$100 per year, the City would need either:

### OPTION 1: REDUCE THE LEVY

**\$363,000**

in actual levy reductions, not simply budget cuts

### OPTION 2: GROW THE TAX BASE

**\$53.6 million**

in new taxable growth outside a TID (about 150 new homes at \$360,000)

- Growth lowers tax bills only when it comes from new parcels, not market revaluation.
- Goal: keep taxes as stable as possible; meaningful relief comes as TIDs close.

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## KEY OPPORTUNITIES (HIGH-LEVEL)

- Business Park recruitment
- Regional partnerships
- Downtown revitalization momentum
- Housing initiatives
- Increased communication efforts that build trust
- Strategic financial forecasting and evidence-based planning



# QUESTIONS?

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