

Did the City budget grow from \$25 million to \$50 million?

A claim circulating in the community, what the \$50 million figure actually measures, and what taxpayers pay

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Two very different numbers

\$49.5 million

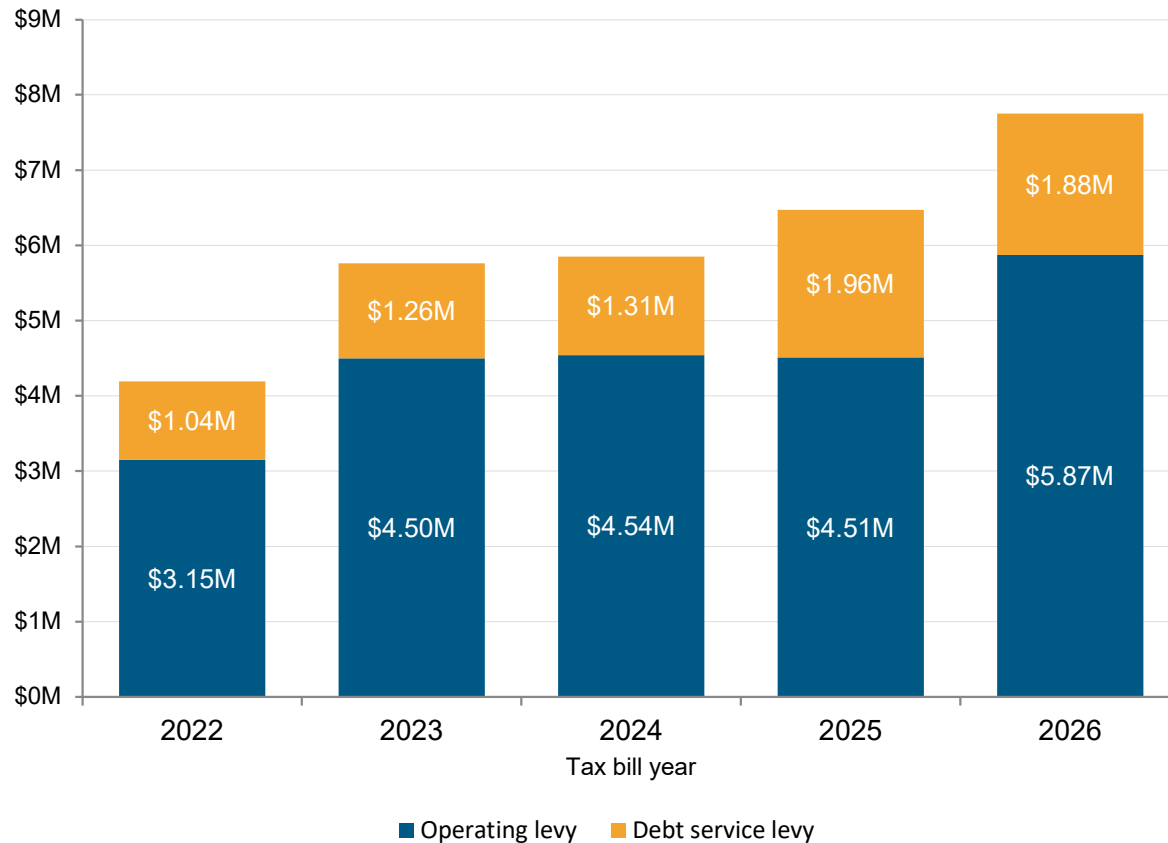
The total of all 44 City accounting funds, including utilities, construction, and transfers counted in two funds

\$7.7 million

The City property tax levy: what property owners actually pay for City government

The \$25M to \$50M claim uses the first number. Taxpayers pay the second. Most of the gap is water, sewer, and stormwater construction paid by ratepayers and bonds, plus one-time capital projects. The same budget already shows the all-funds total falling to \$38.4 million in 2027 as those projects finish.

The City levy, year by year



\$4.2M to \$7.7M

2022 to 2026 tax bills

Operating levy moved twice

- 2023: Fire/EMS referendum (\$1.1M)
- 2026: April 2025 public safety referendum (\$1.3M)

Outside those two years, it moved less than \$51K in any year

- State levy limits hold growth to net new construction, \$25K to \$51K a year; a closing TID returned \$219K in budget year 2023

Debt levy: about \$833K

- Most of the non-referendum increase; Council's capital borrowing for roads, facilities, and equipment, documented in the CIP

Every operating levy increase went to the voters

Tax bill	Total City levy	Change	What changed	Who decided
2022	\$4.20M		Base year	
2023	\$5.76M	+\$1.56M	Fire/EMS referendum (\$1.1M) for consolidation; TID closure and NNC (+\$244K)	Voters
2024	\$5.85M	+\$0.10M	Net new construction only	Levy limit
2025	\$6.46M	+\$0.61M	Debt service step for capital projects	Council (CIP)
2026	\$7.74M	+\$1.28M	Public safety referendum (+\$1.3M); NNC +\$51K; debt levy down \$73K	Voters

2026 referendum funds five police officers, one dispatcher, and two firefighter/EMTs (Budget pp. 4, 7).

The tax rate tells the same story

\$6.36

City rate per \$1,000, 2022 tax bill

\$7.52

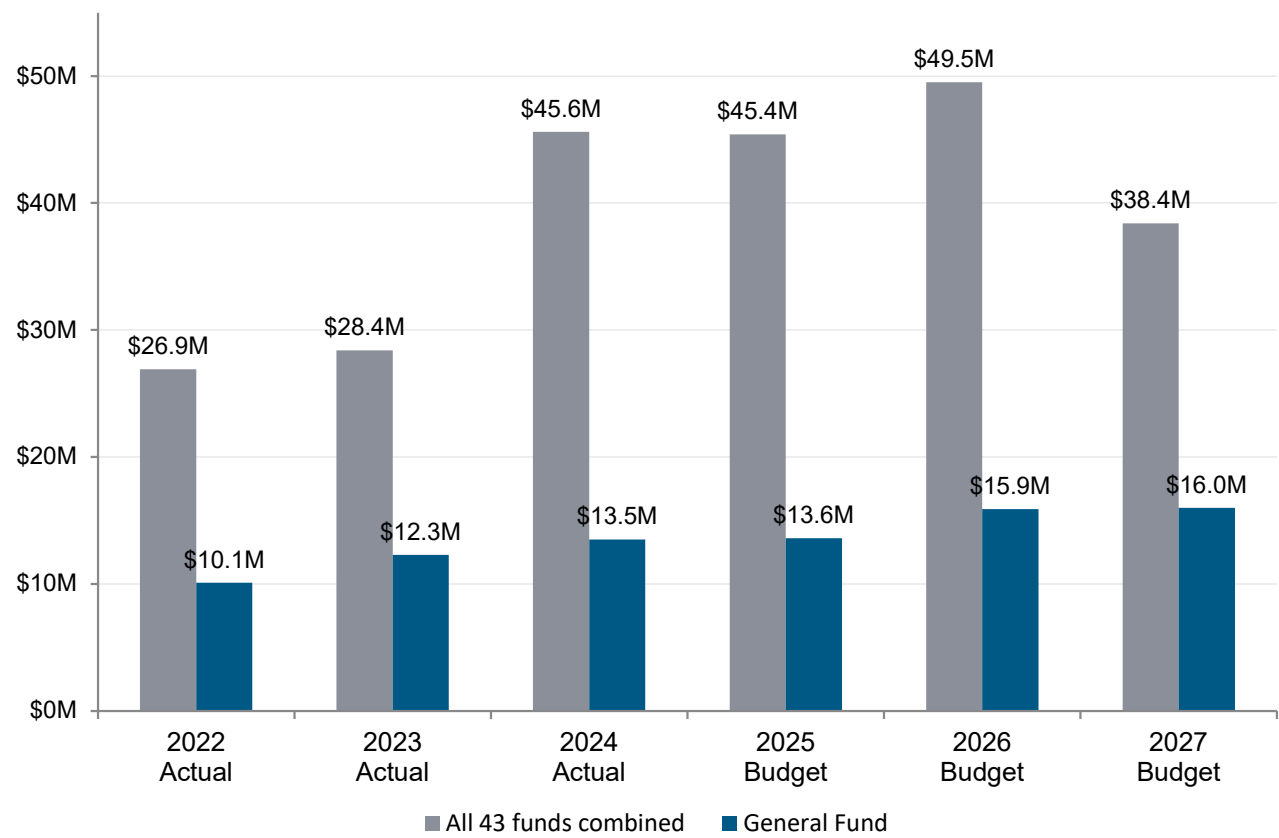
City rate per \$1,000, 2026 tax bill, both referenda included

+18%

Rate change over four years while equalized value grew 47%

The City is one of four jurisdictions on the bill. The school district, county, and technical college levy the balance. No reading of the City levy or the City rate produces a doubling, or anything close to it.

Where the \$25 million to \$50 million comes from



The grey bars

Page 48 adds up all 44 accounting funds. Taking 2022 or 2023 as the base and 2026 as the endpoint gives \$25M to \$50M.

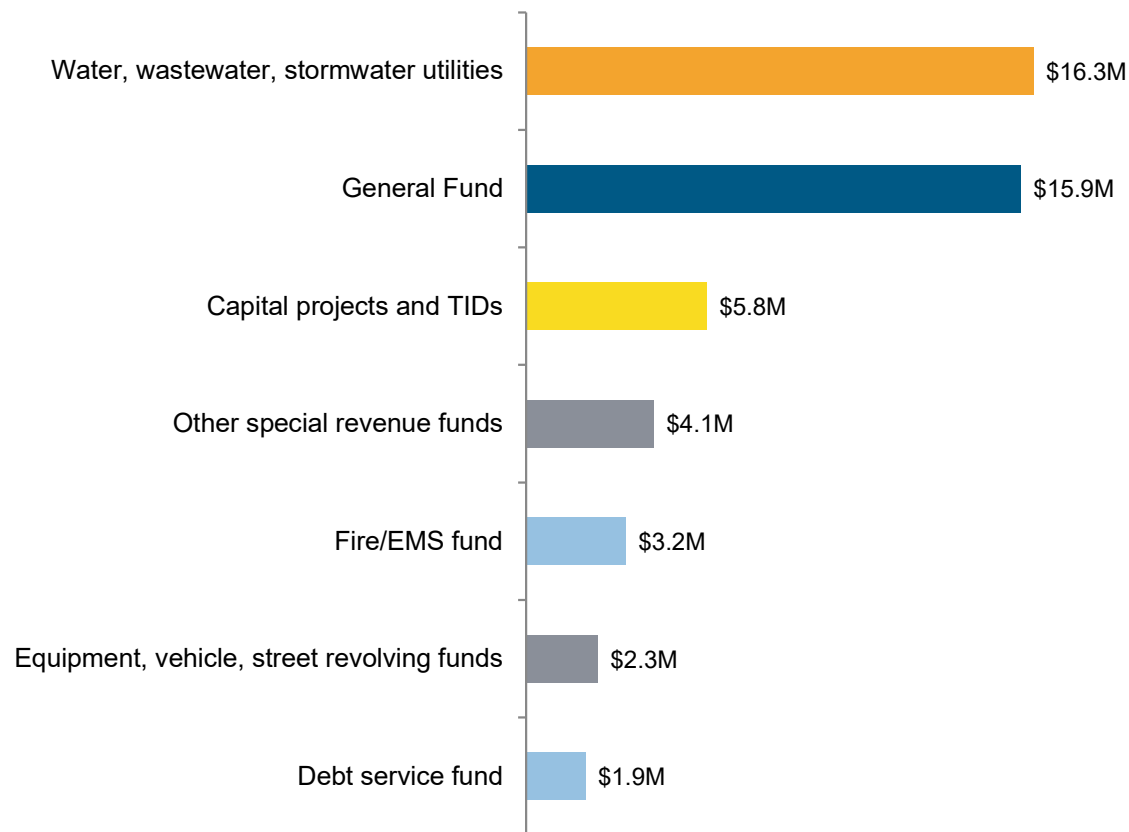
The blue bars

The General Fund is what the levy supports. It grew \$5.8M, almost all of it the two referenda and higher State shared revenue.

2027

The all-funds total drops \$11M as utility and capital projects finish. That is a construction cycle, not a spending level.

What is inside the \$49.5 million (2026)



Paid by ratepayers and bonds

Plant and pipe construction funded by utility bills, not the levy (p. 4).



Borrowing and tax increment

One-time projects; \$5.3M in 2026, \$1.3M in 2027.



Funded by the levy

The General Fund is the only line tied to property taxes.



Counted twice

About \$5.3M moves from the General Fund into Fire/EMS, debt service, and revolving funds and is counted again there (p. 59).

Summary

1

What taxpayers pay is the levy: \$4.2M to \$7.7M over four years.

Budget p. 52

2

Of the \$3.5M levy increase, \$2.4M was approved by voters at the ballot box, all of it for public safety: Fire/EMS in 2023, police, dispatch, and firefighter/EMTs in 2026.

Budget pp. 4, 9, 52

3

The remainder was adopted by Council through the annual budget: \$833K in CIP borrowing, \$219K returned by a closing TID, and \$84K in net new construction.

Budget pp. 4, 9

4

The \$50M figure adds up all 44 funds, including ratepayer-funded utilities and one-time construction, and counts \$5M of transfers in two funds.

Budget pp. 48, 59

5

The same document shows that total falling to \$38M next year as the projects finish.

Budget p. 48

Beginning with the 2027-2028 budget, the Budget Message will include a one-page summary that leads with the levy and nets out transfers.