

## FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Program Mayor and Council Q&A

- ◆ = General document/process question
- = Operating budget question
- = Capital budget question

### Councilmember Myles (3/3/26 email):

1. ■ Why are the new construction, and alteration, fire protection systems, electrical permit, site plan application, zoning application, stormwater alternative fees increasing so steeply? Will this be a barrier?

*The proposed changes to these fees are the result of a fee analysis intended to promote cost recovery for fee-funded services. Fees administered by CPDS and Public Works had not undergone a comprehensive fee analysis since 2011. The city has benchmarked fees in a number of key areas and has proposed some fees that fall below full cost recovery to ensure that the city remains competitive for development.*

### Councilmember Van Grack (3/6/26 email):

2. ■ I truly appreciate the much-needed support in the proposed budget for the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department. As I understand the Proposed Budget, (1) \$12,000 is proposed as a direct grant to the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department for the water cost subsidy; (2) \$50,000 is proposed as a contribution for needed vehicle support, and (3) budget operational support is provided for the planned relocation of Station 3. First, is this overview correct? Second, can you clarify what RVFD's water costs were during the past two fiscal years? Third, can you clarify what RVFD's specific requested vehicle support to the City was for this current fiscal year (i.e., what upgrades did they relay were needed, for which types of vehicles, and how much was requested)?

*The overview is correct. To be clarify on item 3, the city is dedicating staff time to partnering with RVFD on strategies in support of the relocation. Actual water costs for FY24 were \$7,795 and for FY25 were \$8,412. Prior to FY25 the city's grant was \$10,000 and it was increased to \$12,000 in FY25. The RVFD made a formal request for \$250,000 to partially fund a new ambulance (EMS unit).*

3. ● As we saw during the reunification after the Wootton Shooting last month, the CIP Appropriation of Scott-Veirs Drive Shared-Use Path (TA23) is critical for pedestrian safety, especially for family/students at Wootton High School and Frost Middle School. My understanding as that with the FY 2027 appropriation and anticipated FY 2028 funding, it is anticipated that this project would be completed by the end of FY 2028. Is this correct? And is this completion dependent on any non-guaranteed federal funding?

*A \$200,000 federal grant (Transportation Alternatives Program Grant) is included in this project to support design, that will start in FY 2026. This grant was awarded in 2025, and staff do not*

*anticipate a rescission of this award. Staff anticipates construction start in FY 2028 with completion in FY 2029. The construction costs are estimated at \$3,000,000 and are currently unfunded. Staff are exploring grant opportunities for construction. The estimated completion date assumes future funding is secured, either with internal or external resources.*

4. ● The CIP Appropriation of Hurley Avenue Budget Replacement (TE16) has been on hold for a number of years. My understanding is that there is no appropriation to the project in FY 2027 and that construction is now not slated to begin until FY 2028 and no be completed. Is this correct? Is there a reason for this delay? And is this completion dependent on any non-guaranteed federal funding?

*The overview is correct – estimated construction completion is now FY 2029. Design completion and construction start dates were adjusted according to the final design and federal process requirements. The city is utilizing SHA design contracts for consulting services. Delays are attributed to SHA negotiations failing on a final design contract with one structural engineering firm and transitioning to another firm. This pivot was due to higher than anticipated fees being quoted by the first firm. The overall negotiation for the final design contract took longer than anticipated. Federal aid for construction is currently unfunded, and is expected to cover 80% of the total project cost, however, a subsequent agreement for the construction funding will be needed when design is closer to completion. There is no known reason the city would not be able to receive federal aid for construction.*

5. ■ During the Economic Development Worksession on Feb. 9, 2026, both Cindy Rivarde (REDI) and the City Manager confirmed that the City’s overall economic development would benefit from an overall approach of addressing and updating wayfinding/signage, public space beautification, entrance area improvement, public area landscaping improvements, and shared-use improvements. To move forward with such a plan, which was endorsed by those at the Worksession, (1) how would the city begin this approach in FY 2027, (2) what would be the potential initiation cost in FY 2027, and (3) what department/budget allocation area would be most appropriate for this appropriation be included for FY 2027 within the current budget availability?

*FY 2026 Budget Amendment #1 included \$160,000 for Wayfinding Phase 1 which includes the design, fabrication and installation of 73 Vehicular wayfinding signs, 8 Pedestrian signs, 5 Destination signs, and 5 Parking signs in the Town Center area. This initiative is noted in the Public Works FY 2027 outlook. The contract for these services is expected to be awarded in FY 2026 and executed in FY 2027. The FY 2027 budget includes ongoing funding for the neighborhood welcome signage efforts and increased funding for plantings in right-of-way areas. No dedicated funding is included in the proposed budget for the development of a formal beautification plan (monuments, signs, lighting, landscaping, etc). If the Mayor and Council are interested, consultant services of \$100,000 could be used to develop a formal plan.*

6. ■ The Rockville Police Department has done an incredible job with the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) Program at Richard Montgomery High School and Wootton High School. As I understand the FY 2027 budget allocation proposed for the Police Department, the City would now provide a CEO at Rockville High School as well, correct? And kindly confirm that this allocation would not diminish or reduce our existing CEO support for Richard Montgomery High School or Wootton High School, correct? And is this increase show through the 11.44% increase of Personnel for the RCPD (2.0 FTE Police Officers)?

*The FY 2027 proposed budget includes added officer capacity that will provide a CEO at Rockville High School. No support currently dedicated to other schools/clusters are proposed for reduction.*

7. ● The CIP Appropriation of Pedestrian Bridge Replacement: Horizon Hill Park (RB22) has been on hold for a number of years. My understanding is that this project will completed by July 1, 2026 (in just a few months). Is this correct?

*Staff anticipate that construction will start in FY 2026 and be completed in FY 2027. The project timeline that appears at the bottom of each project page specifies a date that is aligned to the fiscal year that the milestone is expected. (i.e. 07/01/2026 corresponds to FY 2027)*

**Mayor Ashton (2/25/26 and 3/6/26 emails)**

8. ● There has been some chatter about a potential impact to local jurisdictions and WSSC related to the Potomac River septic issue. There could be a cost that comes back to water providers that gets passed on. I am hearing different things on what Federal funding may/may not cover as well as different things on cost. I know staff will be digging in on this and look forward to hearing updates in the context of budget discussions.

*The city pays a proportional share of the rehabilitation and repair of the Potomac Interceptor based on our proportional share of our sewage flow capacity in the pipe. Some of the recent year-over-year increases in the Blue Plains CIP can be attributed to ongoing and planned rehabilitation of the Potomac Interceptor. Additional costs for this emergency repair will be assessed to the city as well. These amounts have not yet been determined. It may be several months or more before the costs are known. Staff will continue to monitor this issue, coordinate with WSSC to stay apprised in any increases in cost and inform Finance as soon as more information is available.*

*Staff has no additional information yet on the total costs or level of federal support to repair the break, however we strongly recommend providing the letters of support that WSSC is requesting. As the City's overall share of costs associated with the break at the Potomac Interceptor is 4.9%, assuming the overall costs are conservatively between \$10 - \$20M, the City's potential costs would be \$490,000 - \$980,000 before any federal funding is considered. This would be funded from the City's Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment: FY26- FY30 CIP (UA26), which has capacity to absorb the additional costs in the FY26 budget and the additional one-time cost would not impact the FY27 budget.*

*DCWater and WSSC have been planning repairs to the Potomac Interceptor for several years, with an anticipated investment of \$600M over 10 years. The City's Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment: FY26-FY30 CIP is funded to reflect the city's share of the costs associated with the long-term Potomac Interceptor rehabilitation and other capital projects at the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant and Dewater's wastewater collection system.*

**Councilmember Jackson (3/8/26 email)**

9. ● Could you perhaps elaborate and provide some clarity on Shady Grove WMATA Access Road Streetlighting (NEW6)? It was my understanding that it was more than just streetlights.

*This project focuses on the addition of street lighting on this frequently traveled corridor as a public safety enhancement. No other construction is planned as part of this project. If other pedestrian safety needs are identified, this work could be considered within the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety: FY26-FY30 (TD26) project following negotiations and coordination with WMATA.*

10. ■ Could you provide some background as to the City's process for evaluating whether to hire new FTE staff? Does the City do an evaluation of services? Try to repurpose staff? Try to look at whether the job could be done by a temp or by a contractor, etc?

*The city evaluates requests for new FTE positions as part of the annual budget development process. Departments are expected to first review whether service needs can be addressed using existing resources, including redistributing duties, improving workflows, or leveraging technology. If additional capacity is still needed, departments consider whether the work could be performed through alternative means such as temporary staff, or contractual services before requesting a permanent position. Requests for new positions are reviewed by the City Manager's Office and Finance Department and evaluated based on workload trends, service demands, regulatory requirements, and alignment with the Mayor and Council's priorities. This process helps ensure staffing decisions are thoughtful, necessary, and fiscally responsible.*

11. ◆ This graph shows the median home value price up until 2024. Where is 2025? Don't we have more current data? It seems like the values are rising at an accelerated rate. While this might appear like good news for some homeowners, it could be bad news for buyers especially first-time homebuyers, people with limited income who have to pay increased amounts of property taxes, etc. Do we see these likely increasing at the same rate in the future? A gradual downturn – and what would be the effect of the number suddenly reversing itself just as it climbed?

*This information comes from the 2024 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau. This dataset was released on January 29, 2026. Staff expect that growth will slow, but not result in a downturn. The five-year financial outlook for the General Fund assumes that assessed values will grow 4% per year. This is less than the 5.7% growth we observed for FY26. For property owners, any increase to assessed value is phased in equally over a three-year period, and the resulting increase in the property tax bill is capped at 10 percent. Any decrease is fully factored into the first full levy year after the assessment. If there was a crash of the housing market and home values reduced we would experience a reduction in property tax revenue.*

12. ◆ I would like to see several more years of the city FTEs to get a sense of the historic size of city government.

*A ten year schedule is provided below.*

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
<b>Regular</b>	516.9	518.1	522.6	521.8	524.8	538.5	540.5	556.6	570.1	576.9
<b>Temporary</b>	95.1	98.0	98.2	100.2	95.9	100.0	100.6	96.9	96.9	105.0
<b>Total</b>	612.0	616.1	620.8	622.0	620.7	638.5	641.1	653.5	667.0	681.9

13. ◆ I am also curious on the real property taxes going back a few years. The chart only shows 2018 – would it be possible to look at a few more years? Say 5? I’m curious what the average increase was like before and after COVID.

*Taxable Assessed Values for FY 2007 – FY 2017 is shown below*

FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
9.0	10.1	11.1	11.6	11.5	11.3	11.3	11.5	11.5	12.3	12.7

**Mayor Ashton (3/9/26 email)**

14. ◆ Please provide more information about the jurisdictions included in the fee study and whether we can include jurisdictions known for strong economic development.  
*The jurisdictions used for benchmarking with the fee analysis included Montgomery County, Frederick County, City of Gaithersburg, and City of Frederick. When evaluating the City’s fees and charges, comparisons are most meaningful when made against jurisdictions that operate within the same regional economic and regulatory environment. For this reason, Rockville’s fee benchmarking focuses primarily on neighboring jurisdictions. By contrast, comparing Rockville’s fees to jurisdictions in Virginia or in other parts of Maryland can be less informative due to differences in laws, development regulations, service responsibilities, and cost structures. These structural differences can significantly influence how fees are set and what services they support. Future studies can explore benchmarking in other areas.*
15. ◆ Can you please adjust the fee comparison chart to show percent increase? In addition to the last adjusted, can you show the last few times these were adjusted?  
*Providing a straight percentage increase can be nuanced for many fees that include minimums, maximums, or other incremental charges. If there are certain fees that you would like compared, please identify these. Similarly, if you need the history for a particular fee, we can perform that research, but this is not data we have easily accessible across every fee type.*
16. ■ Why increase the solar panel fee? With the SolarApp streamlining we have reduced the work required to review these permits. We have also recently allowed a charge for the use of the SolarApp. We want to encourage green conversions in the face of rising energy costs.  
*Development and regulatory fees will be discussed more at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> worksession.*

17. ■ New construction multifamily residential- staff has encouraged efforts to reduce required parking to help bring down the costs of new construction and improve affordability and financing. Why increase fees that will likely be just passed onto tenants or make financing harder?

*Development and regulatory fees will be discussed more at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> worksession.*

18. ■ Please provide additional background on the increase for the automation fee. This was only recently added as a fee.

*Development and regulatory fees will be discussed more at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> worksession.*

19. ■ Why increase the sprinkler fee? It is a public safety item. Same for the smoke control and special hazard protection.

*Development and regulatory fees will be discussed more at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> worksession.*

20. ■ Do we really need to increase the rough wiring outlet fee? Will this have an inadvertent impact on builders reducing the number of outlets for tenants?

*Development and regulatory fees will be discussed more at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> worksession.*

21. ■ Youth programming fees - I can't tell what the changes are, but the upper limit moves from \$230 to 320. Can you share more information? We try to keep programming financially accessible, especially for youth and seniors.

*This only reflects a change in the program registration process. The annual student performance is being included in the program fee for the Ballet program. Previously program and performance fees were separate registrations.*

22. ■ Is the preliminary sediment control plan fee moving from \$103 to \$1775 or is that a typo?

*Development and regulatory fees will be discussed more at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> worksession.*

23. ■ Please share the tiers of what is being proposed for the speed camera fee. The state recently made changes. What is being proposed for the City?

*Tickets generated by speed camera violations carry the following fines. The fee summary reflects the changes made by the State which went into effect on October 1, 2025.*

12 to 15 mph over	\$40
16 to 19 mph over	\$70
20 to 29 mph over	\$120
30 to 39 mph over	\$230
40 mph or more	\$425

24. ■ Has the City built anticipated expenses for the State FAMLI leave into the budget, which are set to begin January 2027?

*The program is scheduled to begin on January 1, 2028. Employers can contribute to and participate in the state program or they can self-fund or they can purchase a plan on the commercial market. The city is planning to purchase a plan on the commercial market. Employers will need to contribute into the State plan beginning on January 1, 2027, through an escrow account. Once an employer's commercially purchased plan is approved by the State the contributions to the escrow account can be returned. Staff recommends utilizing unspent personnel funds from the first half of the fiscal year in lieu of dedicating resource capacity, with the expectation that city contributions will be returned.*

25. ◆ How many Summer Youth and Internship opportunities do we have to offer? How many are remaining?

*There are a range of positions, with most based in Recreation and Parks.*

- *Summer Camps: 130 positions/ 12 remaining open*
- *Nature Center: 5 positions / 4 remaining open*
- *Community Centers: 17 positions / 4 remaining open with offers extended*
- *Swim and Fitness Center: 140 positions / 24 remaining open*

26. ◆ Can we share this information on Summer Youth and Internship opportunities with the Education Commission and Principals Roundtable?

*Interested parties should visit [Recreation and Parks Temporary Employee Job Link](#) for openings, as many summer job opportunities have been filled, or interviews have been scheduled. The Rockville Swim and Fitness Center is hosting an Open House Hiring Event on Mon. 3/23/26, 4pm-7pm at RSFC. Certifications or prior work experience are not required to participate in this event and [training opportunities](#) are available for qualified prospective employees, as needed. See the [printable event flyer](#) for more details.*

27. ■ Please provide background for the additional request of 1 FTE for an Assistant City Attorney position. What would be the new role/ workflow?

*The new Assistant City Attorney would (1) assume responsibility, under the Deputy City Attorney's supervision, for the City's compliance with the Maryland Public Information Act; and (2) take on some of the workload currently carried by the other attorneys in the Office of the City Attorney. The City Attorney anticipates that the new position would allow the City to provide more rapid, legally sufficient releases of public information and increase the level of legal services provided to all City departments.*

*Currently, the City Manager's Office ensures the City's compliance with the Maryland Public Information Act and coordinates responses to all requests for information. When legal questions arise, the Deputy City Attorney provides guidance. Under this arrangement, the Office of the City Attorney exercises no direct supervision over the administration of the program and does not*

*engage with the large majority of information requests. This increases the risk that the City fails to meet its obligations under the Act by, for example, missing legal deadlines or mistakenly releasing information required to remain confidential.*

*If approved by the Mayor and Council, the new Assistant City Attorney would be directly responsible for overseeing the City's Public Information Act compliance, with support from a paralegal (who will fill the position formerly occupied by Anita McCombs). Under the supervision of the Deputy City Attorney, the new attorney would directly review many more information requests than is currently possible under existing OCA staffing levels. The new attorney would ensure that the City discloses information in accordance with State law; lower the risk that the City violates the Public Information Act; and free the Deputy City Attorney to take on additional high level legal work.*

*Once trained, the new Assistant City Attorney will devote approximately half of his or her time to public information act work. The remainder of the new attorney's time will be spent on providing legal services to at least one City department and potentially to one or more of the City's standing boards and commissions. This will allow the City Attorney to reallocate the responsibilities of the current attorneys, all of whom carry heavy workloads providing legal services to multiple City departments and boards and commissions.*

28. ■ Regarding the City Attorney's staffing, How many staff transitions have there been over the past 4 years? Please share how many positions have been added over the past 5 years. Are there any existing/anticipated vacancies? Would the additional staff person requested reduce the amount of work that may be currently outsourced?

*For the past five years, the Office of the City Attorney has held seven positions. Over that time period, no new positions have been added to the office.*

*Over the past four years, four members of the Office of the City Attorney have left the office: Two employees, who worked as an Executive Assistant and Assistant to the City Attorney, respectively, retired after lengthy tenures with the City (in one case over forty years). Two other employees, who were both attorneys, left the office to pursue other professional opportunities. In addition, a current attorney with the office— recently announced her planned departure from the City to pursue a position with the Nature Conservancy. Following this latest departure, there will be two outstanding vacancies in the office: a paralegal position, and an attorney position. Both positions are currently advertised, and interviews are being conducted for both positions.*

*The additional Assistant City Attorney would not reduce the amount of work that the Office of the City Attorney currently outsources. The office outsources work only when specific expertise is required—for example, in civil litigation or construction contract disputes—and relies on its in-house attorneys for the large majority of all legal services provided to the City.*

29. ● Can you please share an update on upgrades to parks/playgrounds over the last few years?  
*Maryvale Park Splash Pad (2023). Isreal Park pavilion (2023). Playground replacements occurred at Potomac Woods (2023), Rockcrest Park and Isreal Park (2024), Maryvale Park, Bullards Park and Woodley Gardens Park (2025), Fallsgrove Park and Horizon Hill (2026).*
30. ● Outdoor Exercise Stations have been requested. How much do these cost per install? How are these currently spread across the City? What is the plan to expand?  
*There is a Planned Improvement Project within the budget document for the replacement of outdoor fitness equipment, with a cost of \$30,000 per year. Units exist in Fallsgrove Park, Potomac Woods Park, Horizon Hill Park, Woottons Mill Park, Mattie Stepanek Park , Wilma Bell Park, and the Senior Center. Cost to install ranges from \$5,000 for a single station to well over \$100,000 for multiple stations. No new locations are currently proposed, though one could be requested by the community for the new Talbott Street Park.*
31. ■ Where are we on adding community gardens to parts of the City that don't have one?  
*Funding is included in the FY 2027 proposed budget which would provide 20 plots at RedGate Park. A larger addition is anticipated for RedGate in FY 2028.*
32. ■ Short term rentals are currently not official/legal in Rockville. The legal landscape has been changing vastly across jurisdictions. However, they do they do exist and online providers are collecting taxes from hosts/ users. Who is collecting these taxes?  
*Short-term rentals (STRs) are currently not recognized under the city's regulatory framework, and the code does not define STRs in a way that would subject them to the city's hotel tax. As a result, the city is not currently collecting hotel tax revenue from short-term rentals.*
33. ● Is the City putting aside additional reserves in anticipation of the Potomac Interceptor infrastructure capacity support?  
*Please see the response to Question 8.*

**Councilmember Myles (3/11/26 email):**

34. ◆ pp54 CAP: The plan charts an ambitious course for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the community and municipal government operations by at least 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and carbon neutrality by midcentury. How far along are we to this goal?  
*You can find the real-time status of Climate Action Plan items and progress using the Climate Action Plan Dashboard which can be found using this [LINK](#).*
35. ■ pp65 what's the "non-departmental" expenditures that appear to be driving the year to year fluctuations? same question on pp66 lavender section?  
*The General Fund CIP Transfer increased by \$2.5 million from FY 2026 to FY 2027, up to \$12.3 million. The General Fund Transfers Out also increased, most notably to the Special Activities Fund by \$404,860 which is primarily the result of an increase to the Housing Opportunities Fund*

*and the consolidation of the Rockville Emergency Assistance Program to the Special Activities Fund. Administrative charges expenditures also increased by \$471,500 across all associated funds, which further contributed to the increase in Non-Departmental expenditures. This can be found on p521.*

36. ■ pp67 why is there expected to be an increase in cable & franchising fees? It's historically gone down year over year (though FY2025 saw an increase (pp76: The FY 2027 estimate for this category equals \$1.4 million, a \$174,730 increase from FY 2026 following a formal review of subscriber allocations.  
*The city received a one-time adjustment in FY 2025 after the subscriber allocation review. This review simply adjusted our baseline upward. Staff still anticipates revenue to continue to decline over time.*
37. ■ pp69 Increase why is there proposed increase in miscellaneous revenue?  
*This increase in miscellaneous revenue aligns the budget with recent trends. This increase crosses multiple funds in the Non-Departmental budget.*
38. ■ pp69 Why is there a prediction of increased revenue from parking meter violations?  
*Parking Enforcement Officer vacancies in FY 2024 and FY 2025 contributed to a reduction in violations. With this unit fully staffed, violations have returned to expected levels.*
39. ■ pp69 Why is predicted increase in state grants?  
*The increase of \$80,000 in State Grant funding is due to the inclusion of the grant for a portion of the Senior Center EV bus in the Fleet Services Division of Public Works.*
40. ■ pp69 & 73 Why is there significant predicted increase in the county tax duplication payment?  
*The FY 2027 funding level reflects updates made to the calculations as part of the quadrennial assessment. The county reassessed the number of officers that would be required to service the City of Rockville and this resulted in a notable calculated increase in our tax duplication estimate for FY 2027. The new calculation is for 34 officers (previously 28 officers). Smaller increases were attributed to transportation items.*
41. ■ pp78 why is there such a large increase in medical insurance payments being proposed (pp83: Health insurance increased by 9.9 percent from FY 2026 to FY 2027, up to \$8.4 million across all funds)  
*The 9.9% increase in the health insurance budget from FY 2026 to FY 2027 reflects broader national trends in employer-sponsored health coverage rather than a change specific to the city's benefits structure or offerings. The city's specific medical loss ratio is an element that informs healthcare premiums, alongside other trends such as escalating prescription drug costs. The FY 2027 budget assumes increases for the second half of the fiscal year, though those renewal rates are not yet confirmed.*

42. ■ pp78 is the Increase in postage a function of the upcoming election?  
*Roughly \$10,000 of the postage increase is election-related. The remaining \$15,000 is due to an overall increase in the cost of postage.*
43. ■ pp78 Why Is there such a steep increase Internet and telephone (& cellular) service fees?  
*These increases are due primarily to contract cost increases and updated estimates based on FY25 and FY26 actual costs. These increases were largely offset in the IT department by reductions in communication equipment maintenance funding.*
44. ■ pp80 Why is there such a large predicted increase in fees for vehicle purchases?  
*The city's Fleet Services Division continually monitors and maintains the city's fleet to ensure maximum useful life. Staff review the fleet each year and recommend replacement for vehicles meeting specific age, mileage, meter hours, condition, and usefulness criteria. The vehicle replacements will vary from year to year. The FY 2027 listing can be seen on page 534.*
45. ■ pp80 Why is there a fee for depreciation and why has it increased so significantly?  
*The depreciation charge is a non-cash expense that applies only to enterprise funds and reflects the annual allocation of the value of capital assets—such as utility infrastructure, capital projects, and equipment—over their useful life. This accounting practice annualizes the cost of long-term assets. The increase reflects recent capital investments, which raises the annual amount allocated through depreciation.*
46. ◆ pp85 2nd column/top; where is the beginning of that sentence?  
*This is a carryover from the columns that start on page 84. We will work to tweak this for the adopted budget. This formatting issue only appears in the pdf version.*
47. ■ pp87 & 100 do we spend more money on the speed cameras than we bring in (-\$204.2%)?  
 For police: are speed cameras a cost-effective way to improve street safety?  
*Prior to FY 2023 the city brought in more revenue from speed camera citations than it spent on the operating costs of the program. The extra revenue was available for programming in the CIP for pedestrian safety initiatives. Since that time the operating costs of the program have exceeded citation revenue, and in FY 2025 the General Fund made a transfer to the Speed Camera Fund to offset a negative fund balance.*

*Speed cameras are a cost-effective tool to improve street safety. Their primary purpose is to influence driver behavior, which in turn helps reduce property damage, serious injuries, and fatal crashes associated with speeding. Automated enforcement also allows police officers to focus on higher-priority responsibilities such as responding to calls for service and addressing criminal activity within the city. The intent of these programs is not to generate revenue, but rather to support safer roadways and more efficient use of police resources.*

48. ■ pp94 Why has there been more expenditures than revenues for fiscal year 2026 for the special Activities fund and why do we predict a continuation this pattern for fiscal year 2027? This appears different from the pattern for fiscal years 2023 through 2025.  
*Special Activities Fund revenues are primarily comprised of community contributions, donations, developer contributions, and General Fund transfers that are designated for specific programs and purposes. In many cases it can be difficult to predict the volume of outside support that will be received, and these revenues are often budgeted very conservatively. Actual revenues often come in better as a whole, though there is variability between programs.*
49. ● pp107 does the FY Water Fund expenditures include an estimate of the city's contribution to the Potomac sewage pipe repair?  
*This would be incurred by the Sewer Fund. Please see the response to Question 8.*
50. ■ pp108 Are we taking steps to strive towards goal two of maintaining an adjusted working capital balance of at least 6 months of operating expenses for the water fund?  
*The previous utility rate study forecasted Water Fund compliance with working capital targets by FY 2030. However, unanticipated emergency water main break response costs, equipment replacement needs, and newly identified capital investments could impact this previously established target. This is noted on page 130. The next utility rate study will reevaluate these projections and bring forward a set of utility rates that will promote the improved financial health of the fund.*
51. ■ pp169 Stormwater management expenditures expected to outpace revenues as was the case in fiscal year 2026? Why is this different from the three previous fiscal years?  
*Similar to the Special Activities Fund, there are some developer fees that impact the Stormwater Fund and these can vary from year to year and are typically budgeted conservatively. The projected working capital balance for the SWM Fund is expected to remain in compliance with policy targets.*
52. ■ pp263 why was there such a large increase (\$3M) in expenditures from FY 2025 to FY 2026 for IT?  
*The FY24 and FY25 actuals were reduced in IT and transferred to Non-Departmental due to changes in reporting standards by GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) regarding software and subscription costs. The single largest increase from FY 2025 to FY 2026 is associated with the addition of \$525,000 for CCTV replacement and modernization (Year 1 of the 2 year initiative).*

53. ◆ pp288 why was the closure rate for crimes against persons investigated so low in 2025 and why did we adopt a 65% closure rate in 2026?

*The closure rate was lower in 2025 due to improper closing or clearing of open cases in the reporting system by supervisory personnel. RCPD staff were retrained on the proper way to close cases with the software; therefore, we anticipate seeing the closures return to previous levels moving forward. We will adjust the FY 2027 target to 65% (equal to the FY 2026 adopted target) in the adopted budget.*

54. ◆ pp292 would request a comparison of response times when using the County's 24/7 support vs. In house mental health specialist?

*Approximately 90% of calls for mental health crisis within the city are currently responded to by the County Mobile Crisis unit and/or Rockville City Police. There is no data indicating a measurable impact on response time for the cases that have involved the County Mobile Crisis unit. For context on the volume and response over the last two years please see the table below.*

	2024	2025
Calls for mental health crisis responded to by dedicated Mental Health Specialist	93	78
Total RCPD calls for mental health crisis	742	819
Percentage of calls responded to by dedicated Mental Health Specialist	12.5%	9.5%
Percentage of calls responded to by "Mobile Crisis" and/or RCPD	87.5%	90.5%

55. ◆ pp323 is it possible to increase the proposed/actual percentage of light-duty fleet vehicles that are hybrid and/or fully electric vehicles?

*Manufacturers are moving away from selling affordable EV's in the US market due to the loss of the federal tax credit in 2025. The current transition pace minimizes unnecessary price shock from transitioning too quickly and aligns replacement with the deployment of supporting fleet EV charging stations at various facilities.*

56. ● pp487 why are we budgeting so little (~\$7M less) for Blue Plains Wastewater (UA26) and so little for water main rehab & improvement (especially given multiple water main breaks?)

*Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment (UA26): The estimates for FY 2027-FY 2031 are direct costs attributed to the City of Rockville from the draft WSSC FY 2027-FY 2032 Proposed CIP. For DC Water capital projects within Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant site, the city cost-share is derived from the ratio of reserved capacity between WSSC and the city. The city pays 5.48% of WSSC's share of capital costs for these projects. For capital projects in DC Water or WSSC wastewater transmission system, the city pays a pro rata share of the cost based on the ratio of reserved capacity between WSSC and the city which varies based on the location of the project.*

*Savings from prior years' appropriations are carried forward within this project. In this case savings from FY 2025 were used to reduce the FY 2027 appropriation. The proposed FY27 Budget*

*assumes approximately \$8 million for FY 2027 expenses in this CIP, including carryover funds plus new appropriations.*

*Water Main Rehab & Improvement: FY26-FY30 (UE26): Water main rehabilitation funding and planning is done on a sustainable basis that considers rate affordability. Water main rehab is currently funded at a rate that supports rehabilitating 1% of the system every year. The most significant way to reduce water main breaks is to replace the remaining cast iron pipes in the system with newer ductile iron pipes that are less susceptible to breaks due to temperature fluctuations. This will take a few more decades.*

57. ◆ Does Amazon Web Services to post the PDFS of the budget? Is it less expensive to just make a regular PDF available?

*The city does not use Amazon Web Services to post PDF versions of the budget. The budget is published through the ClearGov platform, which provides a structured, interactive digital document that allows users to navigate funds, departments, and charts, and view financial information in multiple formats that improve transparency and accessibility.*

*While a static PDF is also provided for those who prefer a traditional document, the digital platform supports ADA accessibility standards, language translation, and significantly improves usability for residents and elected officials compared with a single large PDF file. The cost of the platform supports these enhanced features and public accessibility, not merely the hosting of PDF documents.*

**Mayor Ashton (3/13/26 email):**

58. ■ For housing related fees, can you share if we have an apples to apples comparison. For example, do the benchmark jurisdictions have automation fees, tree/park/art/amenities fees? *The forestry fee comparison begins on row 200 of the spreadsheet attachment provided with the memo. It's important to note that although some of Rockville's forestry fees are higher than both Montgomery County and Gaithersburg, the latter includes most of the forestry reviews along with their sediment control permit. When forestry and sediment control are combined, Rockville is on par with Gaithersburg.*

*The automation fee (sometimes called a technology fee) on permits is an additional charge added to permit applications which fund the development and maintenance of online permitting systems and transaction fees. It supports digital services like online application submissions, plan reviews, and online permit issuance. Montgomery County and Gaithersburg both have automation charges for their permitting processes.*

- The City of Gaithersburg charges a 10% automation fee on all permit and application fees and began charging this fee in 2011, as part of the fee schedule for the FY12 budget.*
- Montgomery County retains an automation fee in their fee resolution, but has it currently set at 0%. Montgomery County began charging an automation fee in 1998 (ER5-98), at 10%. This fee was reduced to 5% in 2013 and to 0% in 2016 (ER15-16).*

- *The City of Rockville charged no automation fees until 2023. Even with the automation fee, the revised fees position the overall permit costs in the City very competitively with Gaithersburg and Montgomery County.*

59. ◆ Do we have any comparisons with jurisdictions who are ranked favorably outside of MD in terms of housing/ economic development/small business support?  
*We do not have a broad comparison for jurisdictions ranked favorable outside of Maryland. It would be good for to develop a “peer cities” list that could be used for all sorts of best practice research – fee surveys, ordinance updates, salaries etc.*

**Community Services and Enrichment Grants Questions:**

60. ◆ How were new grant categories established? And when?  
*Legal Services, as well as the Immigrant Communities Resources category, were added this year by DHCD after receiving several proposals from new applicants for more specialized services than reviewed in past years by panelists within existing categories. Creating these categories helped ensure that panelists with relevant expertise could evaluate the applications, including community need and proposed outcomes, more effectively.*

61. ◆ What relevant expertise did panel members have?  
*The same panel reviewed both scopes and included two retired attorneys with experience in human services and disability rights, an ESOL teacher, and a member of the COR Human Rights Commission. The panel was led by DHCD's Collective Impact Manager.*

62. ◆ How many requests did the city receive for legal services?  
*Two separate grant requests were received for legal services, summarized below:*

Program Name	Organization Name	Adopted FY 2025	Adopted FY 2026	FY 2027 Request	FY 2027 Proposed
<b>Legal Services</b>					
Montgomery County Eviction Prevention Program	Community Legal Services	-	-	25,000	25,000
City of Rockville Domestic Violence Legal Services	Volunteer Legal Advocates	-	-	35,000	20,000

63. ■ How much were the requests for, and what is the recommended funding level?  
*The two requests totaled \$60k. The committee recommended \$45k.*

64. ◆ What are the requests for?  
*One request is to provide “legal advice, referral and same-day representation to residents who meet income guidelines and require assistance to prevent the loss of housing and defend against wrongful legal action be landlords and housing providers”. The other request is to “low-income survivors of domestic violence with free legal representation”.*

65. ◆ What city priorities do these align with?  
*These grant requests align with affordable housing and public safety priorities.*
66. ◆ Has the city awarded grants for similar legal in the past?  
*There have not been substantive partnerships with nonprofit organizations providing legal resources in the past.*
67. ◆ What type of organizations would these grants fund?  
*Only 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations can apply for and receive Community Services and Enrichment Grants from the city.*
68. ◆ Is Community Legal Services asking for funding for a County program?  
*Yes, this nonprofit is asking for city funding to expand a program they began operating in Montgomery County in FY26, which also is currently serving Rockville residents. As with other grant proposals and current grantees, organizations must specify how many Rockville residents they currently serve and how many they anticipate serving, when expanding or maintaining an existing program. Rockville residency is confirmed using client addresses and provided in quarterly grant reports.*
- Community Legal Services projects to serve 250 Rockville residents in the current fiscal year and anticipates serving 250 residents in FY27. Grant funding is requested to support community outreach, expungement clinics, and support helping clients apply for rental assistance programs and other forms of emergency assistance.*