



## **Columbia City Council Budget Workshop Agenda**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at 10:00 AM**

City Hall • Mayor's Conference Room

1737 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Columbia, SC 29201

City Clerk's Office: (803)545-3045 or [cityclerk@columbiasc.gov](mailto:cityclerk@columbiasc.gov)

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The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor

The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr. • The Honorable William Brennan

The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, Mayor Pro-Tempore • The Honorable Peter M. Brown

The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey • The Honorable Sam P. Johnson

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### **Call to Order**

### **Invocation**

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

### **City Council Discussion**

1. Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Proposed Budget — Ms. Missy Caughman, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation

*General Fund*

*Public Safety Priorities*

### **Executive Session**

2. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S. C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

*We Love Five Points, LLC*

*Congaree Riverfront District Business Park*

*Convention Center District Business Park*

*Budgetary Requirements Related to the Intergovernmental Fire Agreement*

*CRC 911 Communications Agreement*

3. Receipt of legal advice relating to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

*Brittany Ruffin as PR of the Estate of JR v. the City of Columbia*

### **Adjournment**



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**Meeting Date:** May 5, 2026  
**Department:** Administration - Strategic Initiatives & Innovation  
**From:** Missy Caughman, Assistant City Manager

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Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Proposed Budget — Ms. Missy Caughman, Assistant City Manager / Strategic Initiatives & Innovation

*General Fund  
Public Safety Priorities*

**Background Summary:**

**Attachments:**

1. FY 26-27 Council Budget Workshop Public Safety Priorities Presentation 05052026
2. Fire City Budget Needs\_2026-05-04



# City of Columbia FY 2026-2027 Proposed Budget

**Public Safety Priorities**

**May 5, 2026**

# Purpose of Today's Workshop

- **General Fund Revenues**
- **Review Public Safety departmental needs**
- **Align service expectations with current resource limits**
- **Discuss strategies to close the resource gap**

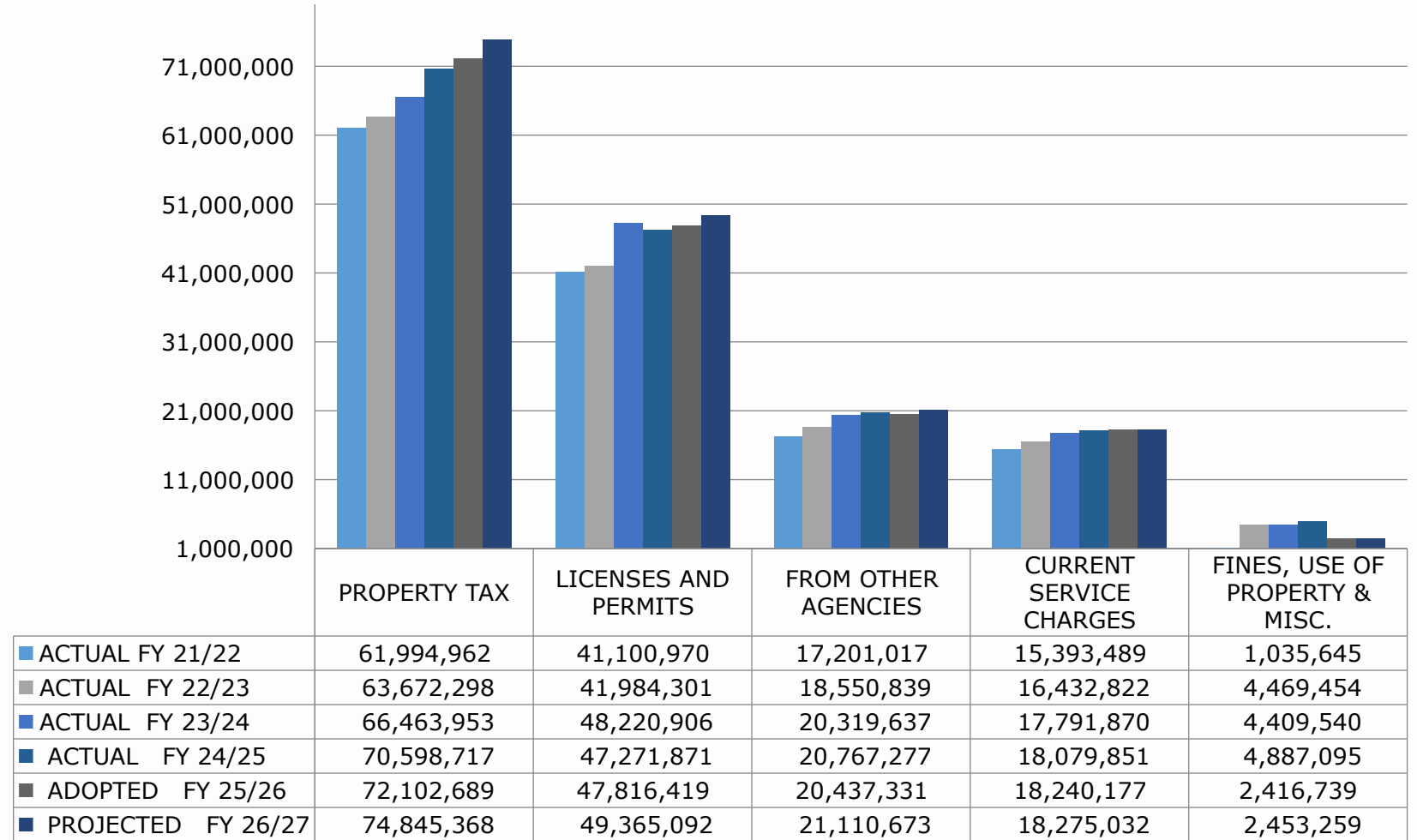
# General Fund Revenues

- FY 26-27 Projected Revenues and Transfers In Total \$180.2M
- Revenues total \$166M
  - Increase of \$5M; 3.1%
  - No rate increases reflected
- Transfers In/Other Sources \$14.2M
  - Reflects net reduction of \$8,750,000
    - Does not include Capital Lease Proceeds at this time
    - Does not reflect use of fund balance at this time
- The projected budget currently shows a decrease of \$3.7 million; the pending adjustment depends on the determination of Capital Lease proceeds and the planned use of fund balance.
- Projections will continue to be updated.

	ACTUAL FY 20/21	ACTUAL FY 21/22	ACTUAL FY 22/23	ACTUAL FY 23/24	ACTUAL FY 24/25	ADOPTED FY 25/26	PROJECTED FY 26/27
<b>REVENUE</b>							
PROPERTY TAX	61,994,962	61,994,962	63,672,298	66,463,953	70,598,717	72,102,689	74,845,368
LICENSES AND PERMITS	41,100,970	41,100,970	41,984,301	48,220,906	47,271,871	47,816,419	49,365,092
FROM OTHER AGENCIES	17,270,672	17,201,017	18,550,839	20,319,637	20,767,277	20,437,331	21,110,673
CURRENT SERVICE CHARGES	15,393,489	15,393,489	16,432,822	17,791,870	18,079,851	18,240,177	18,275,032
FINES, USE OF PROPERTY & MISC.	1,035,544	1,035,645	4,469,454	4,409,540	4,887,095	2,416,739	2,453,259
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>136,795,637</b>	<b>136,726,083</b>	<b>145,109,714</b>	<b>157,205,906</b>	<b>161,604,811</b>	<b>161,013,355</b>	<b>166,049,424</b>
<i>Change from prior year</i>	3%	-0.1%	6.1%	8.3%	2.8%		3.1%
<b>TRANSFERS IN &amp; OTHER SOURCES</b>							
FROM AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN	419,471	0	3,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000		
FROM OTHER FUNDS	580,007	787,547		573,889	566,917	-	
FROM ACCOMMODATIONS TAX	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
FROM HOSPITALITY TAX	1,540,000	3,700,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,800,000	4,800,000	4,800,000
FROM TOURISM DEV FUND						750,000	1,000,000
FROM CAPITAL LEASE PROCEEDS	8,209,133	6,335,529	4,378,794	2,856,262	12,716,592	4,000,000	-
FROM PARKING FUND	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
FROM WATER & SEWER COST ALLOC.	6,189,680	4,189,680	4,189,680	4,748,280	7,234,706	7,251,007	7,251,007
FROM STORM WATER	560,000	560,000	560,000	608,174	623,378	623,378	623,378
FROM UN-APPROPRIATED SURPLUS		0	-	0		5,000,000	
<b>TOTAL TRANSFERS IN</b>	<b>18,023,291</b>	<b>16,097,756</b>	<b>17,153,474</b>	<b>15,811,605</b>	<b>28,966,593</b>	<b>22,949,385</b>	<b>14,199,385</b>
<i>Change from prior year</i>		-10.7%	6.6%	-7.8%	83.2%		-38.1%
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Transfers In</b>	<b>154,818,928</b>	<b>152,823,839</b>	<b>162,263,188</b>	<b>173,017,511</b>	<b>190,571,404</b>	<b>183,962,740</b>	<b>180,248,809</b>

# FY 26/27 General Fund Revenue Projections

- **General Fund Revenues total \$166,049,424**
- Property Tax accounts for 45% of total revenues
- Other primary sources, including Licenses and Permits, comprise 75% of General Fund revenues.



# Where We Are Today

- Significant service expansions in recent years
  - Revenue not keeping pace with expectations
  - One-time revenues and operational efficiencies exhausted
  - Revitalized Energy, Investments, Developments, Growth
- 
- The Capacity Reality
    - Service demands rising faster than revenue
    - Limited remaining flexibility in current budget
    - New services require new resources



# Overview of Needs – Public Safety

- **Staffing – Recruitment & Retention**
- **Infrastructure & Facilities**
- **Community Appearance & Quality-of-Life**
- **Capital & Technology Replacement**

# Police

- Columbia's role as a capital city brings unique and consistent public safety responsibilities.
- The proposed FY 26–27 Police Department budget maintains current service levels.
- The Department's staffing aligns with City growth and development and provides a benchmark for long-term staffing goals.
- Facility and equipment upgrades are part of ongoing modernization needs.
- As the City continues to grow, a fully funded model is needed to support the Department at its authorized capacity. The estimated cost of this model is an additional \$14.7M annually.
- This approach will positively impact response times, proactive policing, officer workload, and long-term crime reduction.

# Fire Department

- Focused on stabilizing staffing, strengthening recruitment/retention, and maintaining operational readiness
  - Compensation investments reduced vacancies from ~75 to 49 over the past year
  - Improved staffing levels have strengthened frontline service delivery and response capability
- Recent Key Capital upgrades and improvements:
  - Burn Building renovation, Ladder 7 & Engine 12, and Swift Water response truck package
  - Investments enhance firefighter safety, training capacity, and ability to serve a growing community
- Continued investment in fleet and facilities supports safety and readiness



*Recent Fire Department Capital Investments*

# Fire Department Operating & Capital Needs

- Staffing - \$1,014,905
  - 2 Fire Marshals
  - 3 Safety Officers
- Scheduled replacement of essential equipment \$763,446
  - Radios, MDTs, specialized operations tools, and training props
  - Requires planned replacement and modernization to keep pace with evolving technology and operational demands
- Fire Station Modernization
  - Fire station improvement plan focused on modernization, including improved privacy in restrooms and dormitory areas, and reducing firefighter exposure to carcinogens.
- Near-term priorities \$24M-\$28M
  - Key facility upgrades
    - Training Tower, Logistics Facility, reserve fleet storage, exhaust systems
  - Targeted station renovations/replacements
    - Stations 5, 6, 11
  - Ladder Company (Staffing)
    - Station 16
- Long-term (5–15 years) \$20M-\$30M
  - Reinvestment across most stations
  - Construction of a new Station 10 to address growth
- Sustained capital investment is necessary to maintain service levels, protect personnel, and keep pace with community needs



# Emergency Management



- Emergency Operation Center and Real Time Crime Center technology upgrades
  - \$500,000

# Municipal Court

- Municipal Court facility needs
- Estimated construction cost \$22M



# Community Appearance Investments

- **Neighborhood Beautification Grant Program**  
**\$200,000**

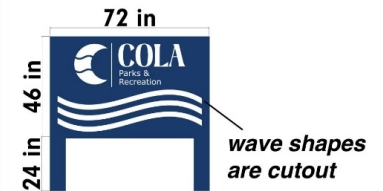
- Support for neighborhood beautification (signage, landscaping, litter control)
- Neighborhood cleanups and engagement activities
- Youth engagement programs and grant opportunities

- **Main Throughfare Litter Collection and Signage Removal** **\$130,000**

- Enhances current efforts
  - City Litter Collection
  - City Edging/Mowing
- Proposal would be for contractor-led cleaning 8x/year
- Primary and Secondary Roads
- Estimated Fifty Miles of Roadways
- Possible Special Event Collections

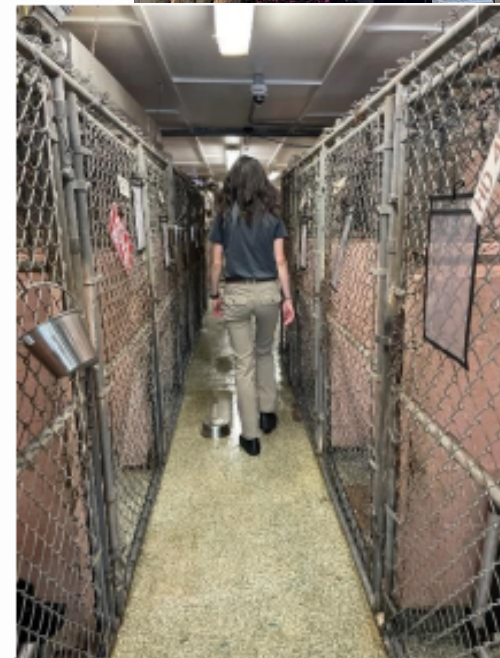
- **Streetlights**

- Conversion to LED
- Streetlights improve safety
- Budget increases annually for the addition of leased lights and electricity costs



# Animal Shelter Facility Needs

- The current structure has limitations that go beyond what renovations can address, highlighting the need for a purpose-built solution.
- A modern facility is needed to fully support best practices in animal welfare.
- FY 2026/2027 Request: \$2,000,000 for facility needs assessment and design services
- Estimated construction up to \$30M



# Capital Replacements

- **Capital Lease program utilized for annual scheduled replacement program**
  - Lease proceeds of \$15,000,000 per year needed to replace Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and other General Fund Departments' rolling stock and technology refresh.
  - Estimated annual debt service of \$2,500,000
- **New capital purchases not included in lease**
  - Subject to budget availability
  - New vehicles, equipment or technology purchases for new or expanded programs

# Intergovernmental Costs

- **ASG Detention Center**

- Proposed daily rate increase of at least \$25 per day
- Estimated budget increase of \$400,000-\$500,000
- Current budget \$900,000

- **Fifth Circuit**

- Solicitor \$215,817
- Public Defender \$225,000

# Total Impacts / Realities for Public Safety Needs & Community Appearance Initiatives

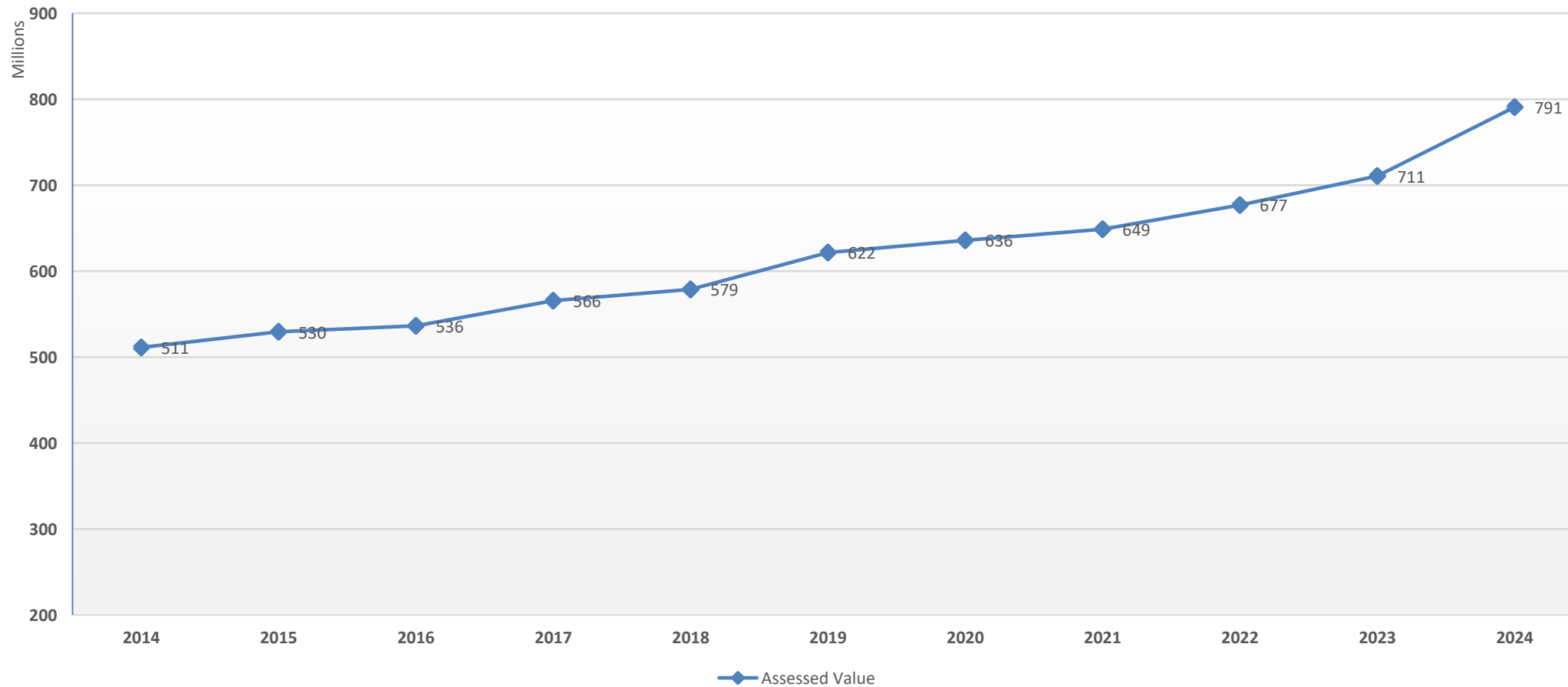
	<b>FY 26/27</b>	<b>Future</b>
Police: fully funded model & equipment needs		\$19,346,000
Fire: Capital and facility needs	\$1,777,446	\$44,000,000
911 Emergency Communications	TBD	
Emergency Management: Technology Upgrades	\$500,000	
Municipal Court: Current facility limitations		\$22,000,000
Community Appearance: Neighborhood & Main Thoroughfares	\$380,000	
Animal Shelter: Current facility limitations	\$2,000,000	\$30,000,000
Capital Replacement: annual debt service	\$2,500,000	
<i>Estimated Costs include a mix of one-time needs and continuing obligations</i>		
<i>Future Cost Include the next 3-15 years</i>	<b>\$7,157,446</b>	<b>\$110,700,000</b>

# Options to Close the Gap

- **Further efficiencies (limited remaining)**
- **Adjusting service expectations**
- **Potential revenue strategies including tax adjustment**

# Property Assessments

Total Assessed Value by Tax Year



Tax Year	Millage Rate
2009*	106.3
2010*	98.1
2011	98.1
2012	98.1
2013	98.1
2014*	98.1
2015*	96.1
2016	96.1
2017	98.1
2018	98.1
2019*	93.8
2020	93.8
2021	93.8
2022	93.8
2023	93.8
2024	93.8
2025*	89.6

\* Reassessment year

# Property Tax Millage

## City of Columbia Millage Calculations

Value of a Mill: \$ 790,791  
 Collection percent 95%  
 Annual Growth Rate 3.50%

Additional Mills	Revenue Generated	Annual Growth
5	3,756,257	131,469
7	5,258,760	184,057
10	7,512,515	262,938
17	12,771,275	446,995

Current Millage  
89.6  
 Eligible Millage  
17.8

## Effect on taxbill by property type

Assessment Taxable Value	4% Mills	Annual Increase	Assessment Taxable Value	Annual Mills	Annual Increase
100,000	5	\$20	250,000	5	\$50
	7	\$28		7	\$70
	10	\$40		10	\$100
Assessment Taxable Value	6% Mills	Annual Increase	Assessment Taxable Value	Annual Mills	Annual Increase
100,000	5	\$30	250,000	5	\$75
	7	\$42		7	\$105
	10	\$60		10	\$150

# Take Aways

## **A responsible and sustainable approach to addressing the realities and needs of our growing community requires the following:**

- Investments in safety and emergency response
- Replacement of aging facilities and adaptation to technological advancements
- Visible improvements in neighborhoods
- Attention to key operational needs and scheduled replacements

# Next Steps

- **Refine budget projections**
- **Develop FY 2027 Proposed Budget**
- **Budget Schedule**
  - May 19<sup>th</sup> – Budget Workshop
  - May 20<sup>th</sup> – Budget public hearing notice sent to newspaper for advertisement
  - May 26<sup>th</sup> – Budget Workshop
  - June 9<sup>th</sup> – Budget Public Hearing and 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  - June 16<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and Final Approval

# Discussion / Q&A



# COLUMBIA-RICHLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY—REPRESENTING BOTH CITIZENS & EMPLOYEES

INTEGRITY—WITH PROFESSIONALISM

SERVICE— ABOVE SELF



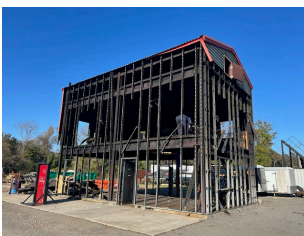
## Budget Summary

The Columbia Fire Department’s FY 2026/2027 financial plan reflects a continued commitment to providing high-quality emergency response, strengthening workforce readiness, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of fire and life safety services for the residents and businesses of the City of Columbia. This budget request supports Safe Communities, Organizational Effectiveness, Built Infrastructure, Economic Growth, and Vibrant Community priorities.

Alignment with City Council Strategic Outcomes	
Strategic Outcome	Budget Alignment
Safe Communities	Staffing, safety oversight, & special operations readiness
Organizational Effectiveness	Recruitment, retention, pay plan, & technology upgrades
Built Infrastructure	Station projects, fleet canopy, logistics improvements
Economic Growth	Reliable emergency services supporting business stability
Vibrant Community	Enhanced quality of life through strong public safety
Communications	Radio/MDT modernization for emergency coordination
Beautification & Appearance	Facility improvements and stewardship of City assets

## Current-Year Spending and Department Progress

In the current fiscal year, the Department has focused resources on stabilizing staffing levels, improving recruitment and retention, and maintaining operational readiness. The City’s continued investment in employee compensation has resulted in measurable progress, reducing departmental vacancies from approximately 75 to 49 over the past year. This progress has strengthened frontline service delivery and improved the Department’s ability to meet increasing emergency response demands across the community.



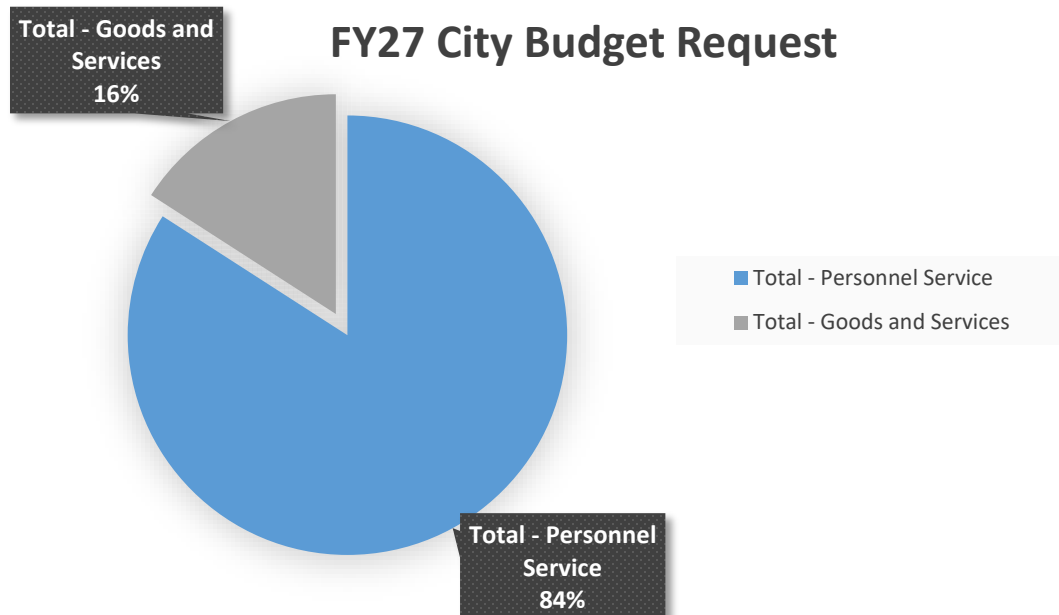
In addition, the City’s commitment to fleet and facilities is evident through continued investments in critical infrastructure and frontline response capabilities. Examples include the complete renovation of the Burn Building, the addition of Ladder 7 and Engine 12, and the acquisition of the Swift Water response truck package. These investments directly support firefighter safety, training readiness, emergency response capacity, and the Department’s long-term ability to serve a growing community.



### Current & Immediate Requests FY 2026/2027

We requested **\$30,491,388** to fully fund the upcoming budget cycle for salaries, goods, and services.

- Personnel Cost: **\$25,644,350.00**
- Goods & Services: **\$4,847,038.00**



## Key Cost Drivers

The requested increase reflects:

- Step increases pay for sworn personnel
- Projected citywide compensation adjustments
- Staffing investments to achieve a fully operational workforce
- Equipment replacement and readiness enhancements

**Staffing & Workforce Priorities:** Recruitment and Staffing remain the top operational priority

### **Planned Hiring & Training**

- Recruit class of 27 beginning February 3 (18-week academy)
- 10 projected direct hires in April (8-week academy)
- Projected Recruit Class of 30 in August(18-weeks)
- Direct Hires as needed in October

### **Position Requests**

2 Fire Marshals	\$300,968.85
3 Safety Officers	\$713,937.93 (50/50)
15 Personnel for Station 16 (Ladder Company)	\$1,393,085.82

### **Critical Equipment Replacement Needs**

Essential equipment such as radios, MDTs, specialized tools, and training props are planned for replacement in the next budget year to ensure continued reliability and adapt to changing operational needs.

Radios & MDT's (2 phase of 3)	\$356,957
Battalion Equipment	\$102,978
Special Operations Tools (extrication kits, drones, chemical analyzers)	\$106,511
Training Props: Training props (propane & confined space props)	\$197,000

### **Capital & Infrastructure Priorities**

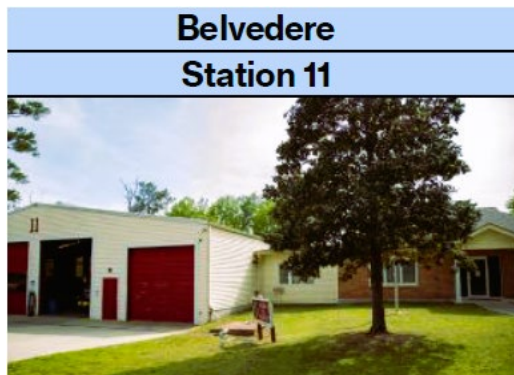
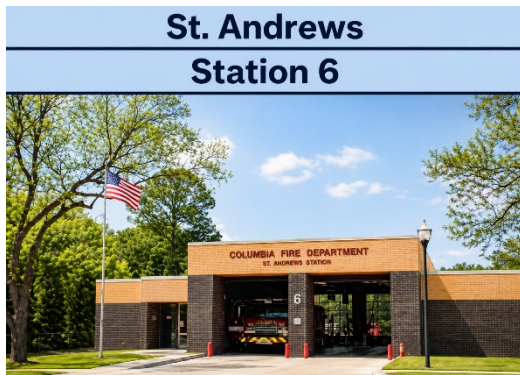
Investments in facilities and infrastructure remain essential to protecting City assets and ensuring service reliability:

Training Tower Assessment:	\$50,000
• Approximation upgrade cost	\$1.5-2.5 million
80' x 100' Reserve Fleet Canopy	\$750,000
New Logistics Facility	\$1,000,000
Fire Station Renovations	\$500,000
Strategic Facility Upgrades Asphalt & Concrete Replacement	\$700,000
<b>0-5 year Station Planning</b>	
• Station 5 (New)	\$6-8 million
• Station 6 (Relocate)	\$6-8 million
• Station 11 (Replace)	\$6-8 million
Gazebo type structure for a gathering place (All City Stations)	\$60,000 to \$100,000

## Training Tower



## Stations 5, 6 & 11



## Vehicle Exhaust System

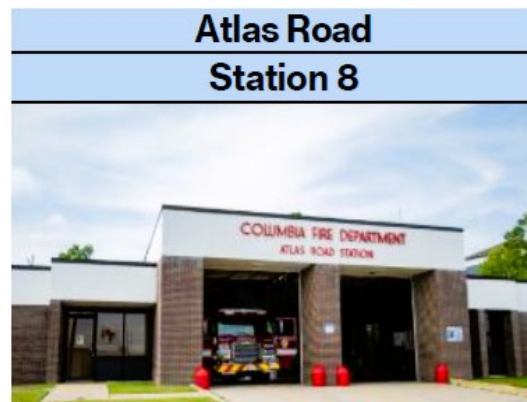
All Stations be up-fitted with exhaust capturing systems, project cost: **\$380,000 (As of 2023)**

## Long Term Needs (5-15 Years)

Apply insights from the Space Needs Study, ISO data, and related recommendations to guide long-term station improvement plan. The plan should focus on improving privacy in restrooms and dormitory areas, update stations to reduce firefighter exposure to cancer-causing carcinogens, and evaluate current station locations to ensure they properly support response coverage, community growth and future ISO needs.

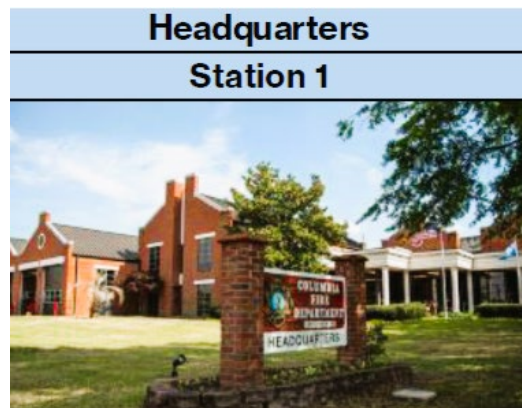
### Station 3 & 8 are expected to need significant renovations or potentially fully replacement

- **\$5.4 million** Renovation
  - Station 3 will help accommodate needs for our recruit school (showers, restrooms etc.)
- **\$6-\$8 million** Replacement



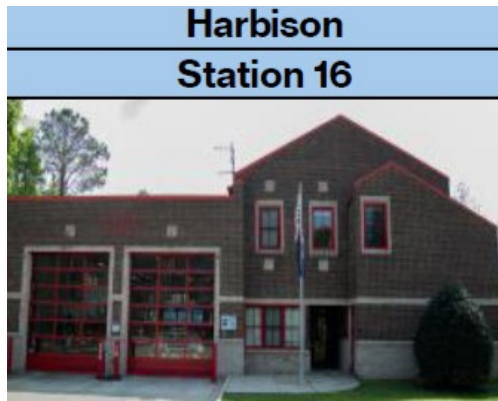
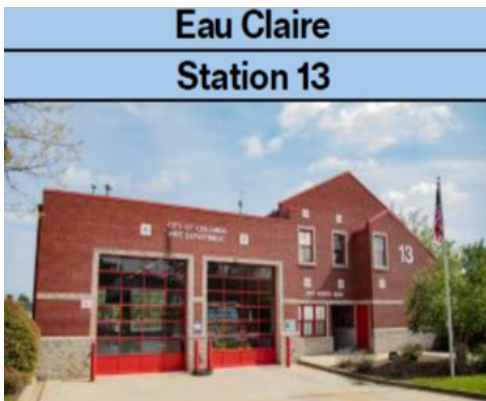
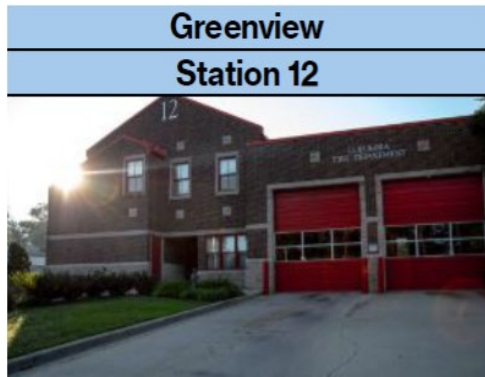
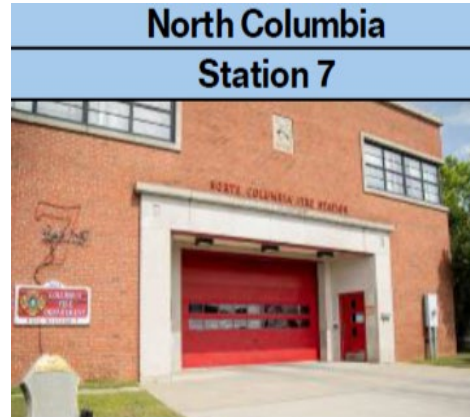
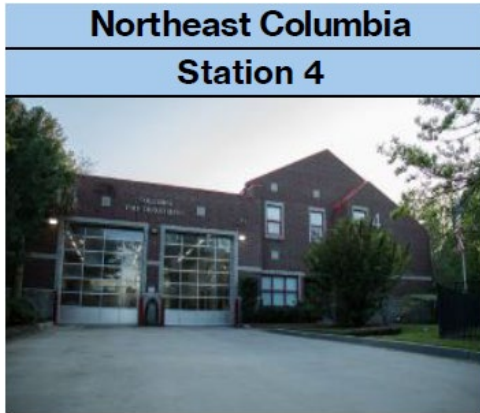
### Station 1

- Renovation to upgrade restrooms, dormitory and cancer initiatives: **\$2.2 million** (as of May 2025)



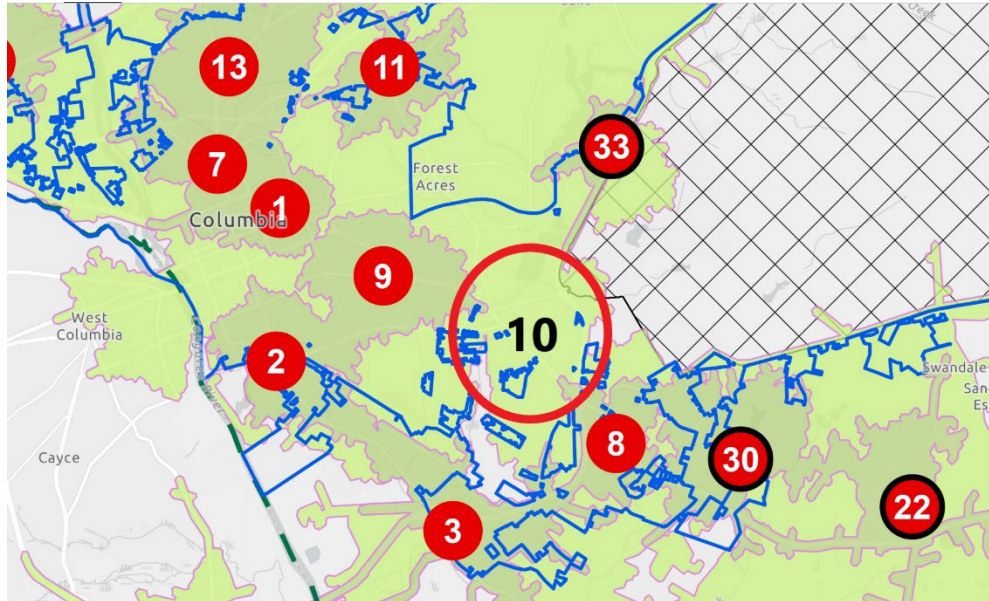
**Station 4, 7, 9, 12, 13 & 16**

- Kitchen upgrades are in the capital improvement program request FY2026/2027
  - Station 4, 7, 12 and 16
- Funding to conduct a Space Needs Study
  - Comprehensive Plan to address needs identified



## New Station 10

- Garners Ferry and Old Woodlands Station to help strengthen coverage in the area between Stations 8 & 9
- Estimated Cost \$6-8 million



## Facilities Priorities

Facilities Priorities – City of Columbia					
	Station	Age	Recommendation	Concerns	Estimated Cost
Immediate: 0-2 years	05 Broad River & Canal Rd	New	New (Strengthen coverage between 6 and 13)	- Staffing - Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	6 - 8 million
	11 Belvedere	30	Relocate/Replace	- Staffing - Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	6 - 8 million
	Training Tower	30	Renovate		\$1.5 to 2.5 million
Short-Term: 2-6 years	06 St Andrews (Broad River & Beatty Rd)	55	Relocate/Replace (Strengthen coverage between 5 and 16)	- Staffing - Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	6 - 8 million
	01 Head Quarters	33	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	08 Atlas Road	47	Replace	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	6 - 8 million
Intermediate-Term: 7-10 Years	09 Shandon	31	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	12 Greenview	32	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	13 Eau Claire	36	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	16 Harbison	33	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	03 Industrial Park	55	Replace (Incorporate recruit training facility needs)	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy - Recruit Facilities	6 - 8 million
Long-Term: 11-15 Years	10 Old Woodlands	New	New	Strengthen coverage between 8 and 9	6 - 8 million
	07 Cotton Town	68	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	04 Pontiac	19	Renovate	- Hot, Warm, Cold - Privacy	\$800,000 to \$2 million
	Monticello Rd & Blue Ridge Terrace	New	New	Address the new development and strengthen coverage between 13 & 17	6 - 8 million
	02 Olympia	0	Renovate	15-year renovation	TBD



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**Department:** Office of the City Clerk  
**From:** Erika Hammond, City Clerk

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Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S. C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

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