

**Ann Arbor City Council Regular Session: May 4, 2026**  
**Email Redactions List Pursuant to Council Resolution R-09-386**

Sent Time	TO	From	CC	Redactions	Reason for Redaction
7:20 PM	City Council All	Jeff Jefferson		Personal Contact Information	Privacy

**From:** [Jeff Jefferson](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Subject:** General Budget and Water Rates  
**Date:** Monday, May 4, 2026 7:20:06 PM

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Dear Council,

Things have certainly changed in the last few years. I recall spending hours pouring over the city budget, line by line, trying to find savings and keep spending down, in keeping with my fiduciary responsibility under local and state law. The result of that were budgets that corrected neglect in areas like employee compensation, safety services, road repair and more. Lately the budget documents look more like junior high power point presentations, and it's likely you will spend every penny you take in, and then some. In fact, since Mayor Taylor took office (as Mayor) in 2014, the city budget has lost all sense of perspective. Here's a few facts that might not have shown up with the cursory process you now go through.

In 2014 the total expenditures were \$343 million.

In 2026 the total expenditures will be \$659 million; let's call it \$700 million at the end of the fiscal year, based on the current years budget amendments increasing spending. Since it's an election year, I expect these budget override amendments to continue to increase, as most of them have been to reward companies who are giving the "best value" to your campaign donations bottom line.

**Since Mayor Taylor was elected in 2014, the budget has doubled - we have increased spending 100% in 12 years.**

In 2014, the population of Ann Arbor was ~118K residents (117,700). In 2026 the population of Ann Arbor is ~123K residents (122,509). We have added only 4809 residents in 12 years, about a 3% growth in population. In 2014, budget spending was \$2915 per resident. In 2026 it will be \$5380 per resident.

**Since Mayor Taylor was elected in 2014 , the spending per person has doubled - you have increased per person spending by 100% while the population has only grown 3%.**

**You all share a stated belief in the "irrefutable law of supply and demand". If supplying our city with ~5000 new permanent residents doubled our municipal costs of operation, what will happen to the demand for city services when we add 80,000 more, as called for in the CLUP?**

The growth of the bureaucracy at City Hall might have a little something to do with the growth in expenditures. In 2014, we had ~700 FTEs on city payroll. In 2027 we will have ~900 FTEs on city payroll, an increase of almost 30%! If each employee costs the city \$150K/year in wages and benefits (a low estimate, the actual number can be found by adding the line items in the full document) that 200 FTE increase only counts for \$30 million a year

of that \$350 million increase in spending.

### **Where is our money going?**

You need to get a grip on your spending. I know that we are always asked to pick up the slack for the lack of property taxes paid by Michigan Medicine, the University of Michigan, and the many other non-profit landholders in our city. The previous council left you the tool to do just that, a PILOT program. But council's ineptitude, ignorance, or an incomplete understanding of the concept of paying one's fair share seems to have stymied that effort. Why are you afraid to ask non-profits in our community to pay their fair share? Michigan Medicine brags on their construction fences that they are adding 5000 new jobs, but they aren't paying \$1 in taxes, and they aren't building a single unit of housing.

Much like the general budget, our water rates have seen a doubling under Mayor Taylor. If you increase costs 6-7% per year, after 10 years, the total cost will be doubled. This year's increase, which I assume you will all support as usual without discussion, will be the rate increase that doubles our rates since Chris Taylor has been on council. I don't know if you have been informed of this by legal staff, but the 6-7% amount has been chosen to be enough to set aside the money we need for massive future service improvements brought on by unchecked development, without being so large a yearly increase as to trigger a successful Bolt challenge in court. I'd love to see one of you push back, for once, over this increase in the cost of living brought on by doubling our water rates. There is no conservation effort large enough to keep families in the lower use tiers. This is a burden on many, and to date not one of you has had the courage to even question it. If a budget is about priorities, surely finding the money to provide safe water and sanitary service without increasing the consumer cost would be a priority. Clean water and public health and safety should not come at such a high cost.

Please do better.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hayner

**From:** [Beaudry, Jacqueline](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Hutchinson, Nicholas](#); [Thomas, Matt](#); [Kaur, Atleen](#); [Dohoney Jr., Milton](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Proposed change to sidewalk fund use and administrative guidelines  
**Date:** Monday, May 4, 2026 8:57:26 PM

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**From:** Thomas, Matt <[MThomas@a2gov.org](mailto:MThomas@a2gov.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2026 2:44 PM  
**To:** Kaur, Atleen <[AKaur@a2gov.org](mailto:AKaur@a2gov.org)>; Briggs, Erica <[EBriggs@a2gov.org](mailto:EBriggs@a2gov.org)>; Roberts, Jordan <[JRoberts@a2gov.org](mailto:JRoberts@a2gov.org)>; Dohoney Jr., Milton <[MDohoney@a2gov.org](mailto:MDohoney@a2gov.org)>  
**Cc:** Higgins, Sara <[SHiggins@a2gov.org](mailto:SHiggins@a2gov.org)>; Taylor, Christopher (Mayor) <[CTaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:CTaylor@a2gov.org)>; Harrison, Cynthia <[CHarrison@a2gov.org](mailto:CHarrison@a2gov.org)>; Disch, Lisa <[LDisch@a2gov.org](mailto:LDisch@a2gov.org)>; Hutchinson, Nicholas <[NHutchinson@a2gov.org](mailto:NHutchinson@a2gov.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed change to sidewalk fund use and administrative guidelines

Councilmember Briggs,

After looking at the issue further, we also recommend further specifying that the millage apply to sidewalks adjacent to "railroad parcels." The provision would read:

To the extent the 2027 New Sidewalk Millage is used for the construction of new sidewalks, it will be used only for sidewalks adjacent to properties outside the Downtown Development District ("DDD") against which the City levies property taxes, single- and two-family houses within the DDD against which the City levies property taxes, City-owned parcels, and railroad parcels.

Let us know if you have any further concerns,

Matt

**Matthew P. Thomas** | Assistant City Attorney  
City of Ann Arbor | 301 E. Huron St., PO Box 8647 | Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107  
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**From:** Kaur, Atleen <[AKaur@a2gov.org](mailto:AKaur@a2gov.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2026 10:53 AM  
**To:** Briggs, Erica <[EBriggs@a2gov.org](mailto:EBriggs@a2gov.org)>; Roberts, Jordan <[JRoberts@a2gov.org](mailto:JRoberts@a2gov.org)>; Dohoney Jr., Milton <[MDohoney@a2gov.org](mailto:MDohoney@a2gov.org)>  
**Cc:** Higgins, Sara <[SHiggins@a2gov.org](mailto:SHiggins@a2gov.org)>; Taylor, Christopher (Mayor) <[CTaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:CTaylor@a2gov.org)>; Harrison, Cynthia <[CHarrison@a2gov.org](mailto:CHarrison@a2gov.org)>; Disch, Lisa <[LDisch@a2gov.org](mailto:LDisch@a2gov.org)>; Hutchinson, Nicholas <[NHutchinson@a2gov.org](mailto:NHutchinson@a2gov.org)>; Thomas, Matt <[MThomas@a2gov.org](mailto:MThomas@a2gov.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Proposed change to sidewalk fund use and administrative guidelines

Thanks for raising the issue, CM Briggs. The team thinks the following might be helpful to give clarity:

To the extent the 2027 New Sidewalk Millage is used for the construction of new sidewalks, it will be used only for sidewalks adjacent to properties outside the Downtown Development District (“DDD”) against which the City levies property taxes, single- and two-family houses within the DDD against which the City levies property taxes, ~~with the exception of City-owned parcels, and railroads, which will be eligible to receive funding from this millage.~~

It would read:

To the extent the 2027 New Sidewalk Millage is used for the construction of new sidewalks, it will be used only for sidewalks adjacent to properties outside the Downtown Development District (“DDD”) against which the City levies property taxes, single- and two-family houses within the DDD against which the City levies property taxes, City-owned parcels, and railroads.

Please let us know if this addresses your concern.

Thanks,  
Atleen

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**From:** Briggs, Erica <[EBriggs@a2gov.org](mailto:EBriggs@a2gov.org)>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2026 8:06 AM

**To:** Kaur, Atleen <[AKaur@a2gov.org](mailto:AKaur@a2gov.org)>; Roberts, Jordan <[JRoberts@a2gov.org](mailto:JRoberts@a2gov.org)>; Dohoney Jr., Milton <[MDohoney@a2gov.org](mailto:MDohoney@a2gov.org)>

**Cc:** Higgins, Sara <[SHiggins@a2gov.org](mailto:SHiggins@a2gov.org)>; Taylor, Christopher (Mayor) <[CTaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:CTaylor@a2gov.org)>; Harrison, Cynthia <[CHarrison@a2gov.org](mailto:CHarrison@a2gov.org)>; Disch, Lisa <[LDisch@a2gov.org](mailto:LDisch@a2gov.org)>

**Subject:** Proposed change to sidewalk fund use and administrative guidelines

A few thoughts about the intent resolution:

1. I do have some concerns about the addition of language that allows the sidewalk millage to be used for filling gaps on City parcels. With such limited dollars and the current sidewalk gap prioritization, I do have concerns that City parcels could gobble up all this funding. However, I think those concerns can be addressed through changes to our sidewalk prioritization decision-making model. I recognize

that there are times with critical gaps might include a city-owned parcel and so additional language is warranted.

2. There is one change that I think is needed to address a dangerous gap in our city. Currently, the use the resolution of intent clarifies that the sidewalk millage will only be used adjacent to taxable parcels. However, one of our most dangerous sidewalk gaps currently is along Plymouth Road adjacent to the Ann Arbor Railroad. I think it's important that our sidewalk millage could be used for matching funds to secure a TAP grant or other external funding to fill this long, dangerous gap that is a daily impediment for transit riders and certainly creates challenges for pedestrians. Copying in Ward 1 Reps, since this sidewalk gap is in their district. I have proposed language in red below, but I'm open to different language/revisions to improve clarity of that entire paragraph.

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ATTACHMENT A NEW SIDEWALK FUND USE AND ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES If the millage is approved, providing up to 0.20 mills for the construction of new sidewalks (the “2027 New Sidewalk Millage”):

1. The 2027 New Sidewalk Millage may be used for the design and construction of new sidewalks at locations where none previously existed. This includes all administrative and ancillary costs required to complete such projects.
2. The 2027 New Sidewalk Millage local share contributions to the City’s federally funded transportation improvement projects will be used to assist the City in securing Federal and State transportation grants, and other outside funding sources, for the construction of new sidewalks.
3. To the extent the 2027 New Sidewalk Millage is used for the construction of new sidewalks, it will be used only for sidewalks adjacent to properties outside the Downtown Development District (“DDD”) against which the City levies property taxes , **with an exception for properties that contain railroads**, single- and two-family houses within the DDD against which the City levies property taxes, with the exception of City-owned parcels, which will be eligible to receive funding from this millage.
4. The approval of the 2027 New Sidewalk Millage will not change the obligation of developers to install sidewalks at their cost along a parcel's right-of-way frontages when those parcels are developed or redeveloped.
5. The 2027 New Sidewalk Millage funds may be used only for projects that are approved starting in 2027 and throughout the life of the millage.

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Erica Briggs

5<sup>th</sup> Ward Council Member

Cell: 734-355-3931

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