

Public Budget Input Follow-Up

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

The goal of this presentation is to provide responses to questions and feedback received during the fiscal year 2026 budget process.

The proposed operating budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) plan documents can be found at:

DSM.city/budget



Common Themes

Questions and feedback received addressed these topics:

Affordable Housing
Birdland Pool
Businesses Back to the City
City Source
Creative Visions Cure Violence Program
Des Moines Area Regional Transit
Earnings Tax
Houselessness
Increase Parcels & Assessed Units
Library Social Worker

Mosquito Program
Multi Use Cultural Center
Non Car Traffic
Police
Program Changes
Public Safety Technology
Schools
Sustainability
Utility Increases

Q: What program changes are included in the proposed operating budget?

The following program changes are included in the proposed fiscal year 2026 operating budget:

- **City Source** – The City Source mailings will be reduced from four issues to one expanded issue per year.
- **Mosquito Program** - In the proposed budget, the mosquito spraying program is proposed to only include one aerial treatment of standing water. This application has been part of our spraying program in the past and will be done in the spring. The parts of the program that have been eliminated include traps for counts and testing, hand treatment of standing water, and truck spraying throughout the neighborhoods. The City will evaluate options if the need arises to address conditions that necessitate additional treatment.
- **Pool hours** – Swimming pool and aquatic center operations will be on regular, rotating closures beginning calendar year 2026. More information on the following slide.
- **Cure Violence** – The current agreement, which expires in November 2025, will not be extended. This additional service was made possible through ARPA dollars that was intended to be absorbed into the operating budget. Unfortunately, due to current budget constraints that isn't fiscally possible.
- **Library Social Worker** – This position will be eliminated. See more information regarding the annual operation budget for the Libraries on a subsequent slide.

Q: How does the Birdland Pool recommendation affect the operations and budget?

The annual subsidy to operate Birdland Pool is approximately \$180,000. After feedback from Council and the public, City Manager and staff provided an amended plan to keep Birdland Pool open during calendar year 2026.

Amended Solution = One Year of Operations

\$100,000

Rotating weekly closures of the City's five major aquatic facilities.

+

\$40,000

Closing the new indoor Reichardt Community Recreation Center pool during summer months when outdoor pools are open.

+

\$40,000

Ending the [Neighborhood Association Capacity Building Grant Program](#).

Q: What is the status of the Library Social Worker position?

In accordance with Iowa Law, the Des Moines Public Library is governed by a library board or a board of trustees. The Des Moines Public Library Board of Trustees is appointed by the Mayor of Des Moines, with the approval of the City Council.

The five-member board determines and adopts policies that govern the operation and program of the Library, including personnel policies and policies governing the selection of library materials, supplies and equipment.



Learn more about the [Des Moines Public Library Board of Trustees](#).

The City provides an annual budget to the Library Board.
Use of those funds is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

Q: What is the City doing to provide more affordable housing?

The City uses a range of resources and tools to support affordable housing. Sources of financial support include Local Option Sales & Service Tax (LOSST), General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and federal grant funding. Programs or services that result in either the support, creation, or preservation of affordable housing include:

- **Tax abatement**, which helps lower monthly and annual housing costs for homeowners
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**, an incentive that helps diversify housing options in large-scale projects
- **Public nuisance abatement**, a tool that removes blight, often most prevalent in areas that have higher affordable housing rates
- **Owner-occupied repair grants** that allow homeowners to stabilize issues often caused by deferred maintenance
- **Code enforcement**, including rental housing code, to create a standard for decent and safe living structures
- **Waived special assessments, taxes, and fees** that promote infill development in areas that have weaker markets for new homes
- **Conveyance by tax deed**, a tool that often is used to redevelop a vacant or abandoned property to housing
- **Rental housing repair assistance** is funding for developers or investors for rehabilitating older building stock to become habitable again
- **Rental new construction assistance** is funding for developers to create new rental units affordable to lower income households
- **Homebuyer new construction** is where the City financially supports organizations like Habitat for Humanity and HOME, Inc. to create new single-family affordable units
- **Homebuyer assistance** is packaged with new construction, where Habitat or HOME, Inc. applicants receive homebuyer assistance when purchasing a home
- **Direct rental assistance**, such as rapid rehousing or housing vouchers (Section 8) support renters needing affordable housing
- **Blighted Property Rehab program** provides gap funding to rehab derelict properties—often affordable to lower- or middle-income households—into livable condition.

Q: What is the City doing to provide more affordable housing? (continued)

In addition to information on the previous slide, the Office of Economic Development is responsible for working with businesses and developers to spur growth within the City. They encourage housing projects to include affordable housing. They can and make providing such housing a requirement where financial aid is sought from the City.

Learn more about the [Office of Economic Development](#).

Q: Does the City have a space that can be used as a Multi-Use Cultural Center?

While the City does not have a facility of space designated as a Multi-Use Cultural Center, there are many rentable spaces in different City facilities.

[Community Recreation Centers](#)

[Park Shelters and Event Sites](#)

[Reserve a Room | Des Moines Public Library](#)

Q: Has the City considered an earnings tax on individuals who work within the City limits?

The City only can assess taxes that the State of Iowa allows, and income taxes are not currently allowed for cities within Iowa.

Q: What resources are the City providing to the houseless population?

The City has a variety of resources included in the proposed budget which is funding the following homeless programs:

- 185 vouchers for the Veteran Administration Supportive Housing Program to house 185 veterans experiencing homelessness
- 80 project-based vouchers for people experiencing homelessness
- 78 vouchers for people experiencing homelessness through the Mainstream Voucher Program
- 74 vouchers for people experiencing homelessness through the Emergency Housing Voucher Program
- 363 units of Permanent Supportive Housing funded through the Continuum of Care program
- Funding of 3 positions for outreach services for people experiencing homelessness
- Funding for Emergency Shelter Services
- Funding for Centralized Intake

Why doesn't the City replace DART with private services?

The City of Des Moines is not the operator of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART). DART is a public transit agency which serves the City of Des Moines and 11 other member governments. The governing body of DART is 12 Commissioners representing each of member government.

Learn more about DART.

dart

Q: How is the city supporting non-car traffic?

Within the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the City's Active Transportation project is dedicated to multimodal transportation such as walking, bicycling and transit. There are also a number of sidewalk projects designed to close sidewalk gaps and repair damaged sidewalks and ramps. Finally, the various streetscape projects and many of the street reconstruction projects include sidewalk improvements, bump outs and dedicated bicycle lanes.

Current CIP Projects:

ST266 - Sixth Avenue Streetscape

ST269 – Active Transportation

ST276 - Ingersoll Streetscape

ST297 - East Locust Streetscape

**SW081 - Sidewalks – School and Priority
Routes**

SW082 – Easter Lake Drive Sidewalk

SW084 – Sidewalk Replacement

SW094 – Skywalk System

Q: How is the city supporting non-car traffic? (continued)

Our trail system continues to serve a critical transportation role in Des Moines. The Parks and Recreation Department's Planning Division manages over 86 miles of trails. This includes trail maintenance and expansion with a focus on continuing to build connections to the regional trail network. The trail system is designed to increase transportation access, efficiency and safety runners, bikers and other non-car modes of transportation navigating throughout our community.

Current CIP Projects:

PK045 – Multi-Use Trails – Repairs, Replacements and On-Going Maintenance

PK193 – Central Place Trail Phase 1 and 2

PK189 – Birdland Park, Resiliency Improvements for the Neal Smith Trail

PK140 – Gray's Lake Parking, Trail and Dock Improvements, Resiliency Improvements for Kruidenier Trail, Increased Trail Accessibility for Christine Hensley Terrace

Recently Completed CIP Project:

PK190 – Karras-Kaul Connector Trail

Q: What are the major changes in the Police Department operating budget?

The Police Department general fund operating budget increased by \$2,659,240 from fiscal year 2025 to fiscal year 2026. That equates to an increase of 3.2%.

Personnel

The total number of proposed positions in the Police Department remains unchanged from the fiscal year 2025 to fiscal year 2026 operating budgets.

Through department reorganizations, the increase in budgeted salaries and expenses was held to 2.3 percent. This is below the typical increase in salaries during a status quo budget.

Contractual Services & Commodities

Contractual services & commodities increased by a combined total of \$409,343. Major increases include Animal Rescue League contract and vehicle costs, department-wide software licenses and annual warning siren maintenance.

Capital Outlay

The increase in the capital outlay budget includes a new CAD system that is reimbursed by Polk County.

Restructuring

By restructuring department organization, the Police Department provided \$551,000 in savings from its projected status quo budget for FY2026.

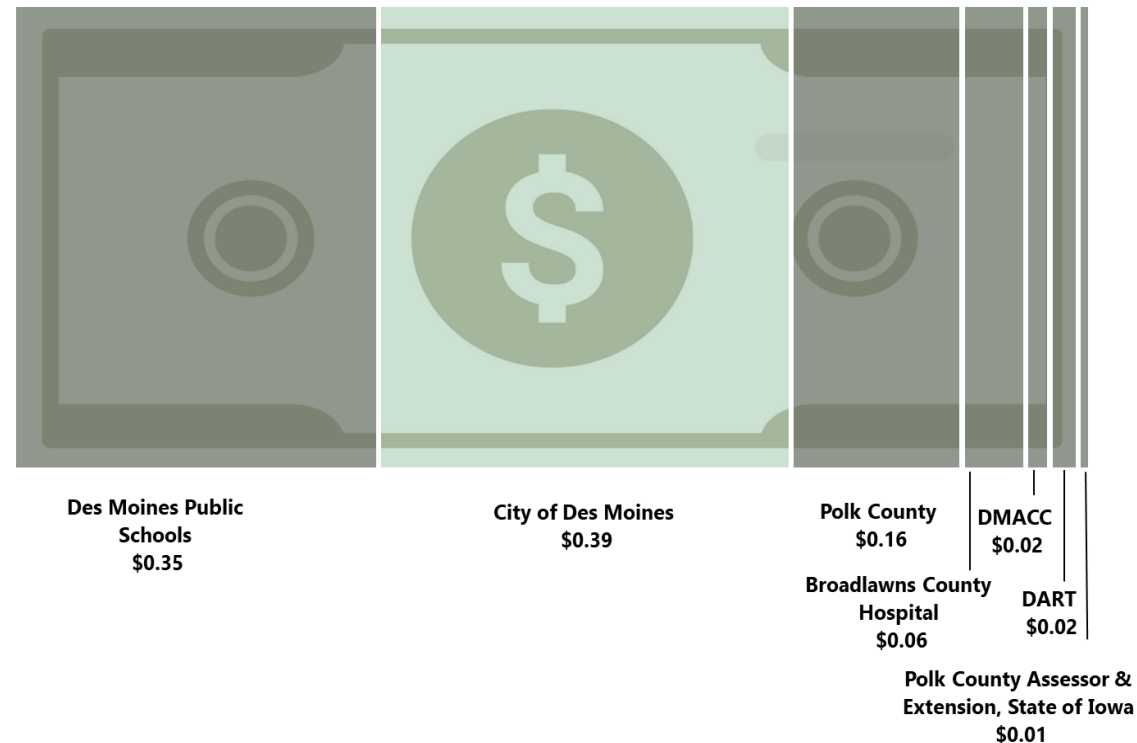
Q: How can the City increase number of taxable parcels and assessed units within City limits?

The City's Development Services Department is the leader in the City's growth and revitalization efforts. They are dedicated to creating and overseeing strategic, long-term urban planning initiatives that shape the future of Des Moines. Learn more about all the functions of the Development Services Department on their webpage.

[Development Services](#)

Q: Can more funding be given to the public schools?

Property owners pay tax levies for multiple, independent taxing authorities including the public schools. In fiscal year 2025, for every \$1 of property taxes collected, Des Moines Public Schools receives approximately 35 cents. This levy rate is determined by the Des Moines School Board, not the City of Des Moines.



Q: What is the function of the Public Safety Technology operating budget?

The Public Safety Technology (PST) Division provides dedicated technology services and support to both the Des Moines Police Department (DMPD) and Des Moines Fire Department (DMFD). Their mission is to enable the efforts of the City's public safety professionals through specialized technologies and data-driven solutions and increase public transparency and access to public safety data. They provide support and data analytics for public safety dispatches as well as management of the software for records and calls for service.

Public Safety Technology Outputs:

[2023 Data and Statistics Annual Report](#)

[Open Data Portal for Public Safety](#)

Q: How is the City moving forward with sustainability?

The City of Des Moines remains committed to our climate action goals and continues to work on the tactics and strategies outlined by ADAPT DSM. An internal team of directors from each of the departments responsible for carrying out the associated work to complete tactics, as well as several staff from the City Manager's Office, have convened to ensure ADAPT DSM and climate goals are transitioned into a department-centric structure.

Immediately after the restructure of sustainability work, CMO staff categorized each of the tactics in ADAPT DSM into work that will continue to, or need to be, implemented into the regular work of our departments. The team formed to transition the sustainability work is reviewing this work chart, and filtering by work occurring/already done, immediate tasks, and long-term tasks, as well as providing feedback on the resources and support they will need to complete these tasks. City staff are also using this information to explore the viability and potential scope of work for tasks to be led by an outside vendor.

Q: What does the City do to bring businesses back to generate tax revenue?

The Development Services department includes the Office of Economic Development. This group is dedicated to helping large and small businesses with project management, site selection, redevelopment assistance and financial assistance.

Learn more about the [Office of Economic Development](#).

Q: Why are utility expenses going up?

The utility services provided by the City of Des Moines include sanitary and stormwater sewers and solid waste collection. These operations are funded through user fees. Property taxes do not support these operations.

Like any privately operated business, the fees collected from users annually must be sufficient to cover the annual expenses which are rising. Fees and operating expenses are reviewed annually as part of the budget process. Any proposed rate changes are approved by City Council.