



# 2026 Budget Timeline and Process Update

Finance Committee  
February 17, 2025

# Agenda

- 2025 Adopted Budget
- 2026 Budget Calendar
- Finance Committee & Council Engagement

# 2025 Adopted Budget

All 2025 budget materials available online:

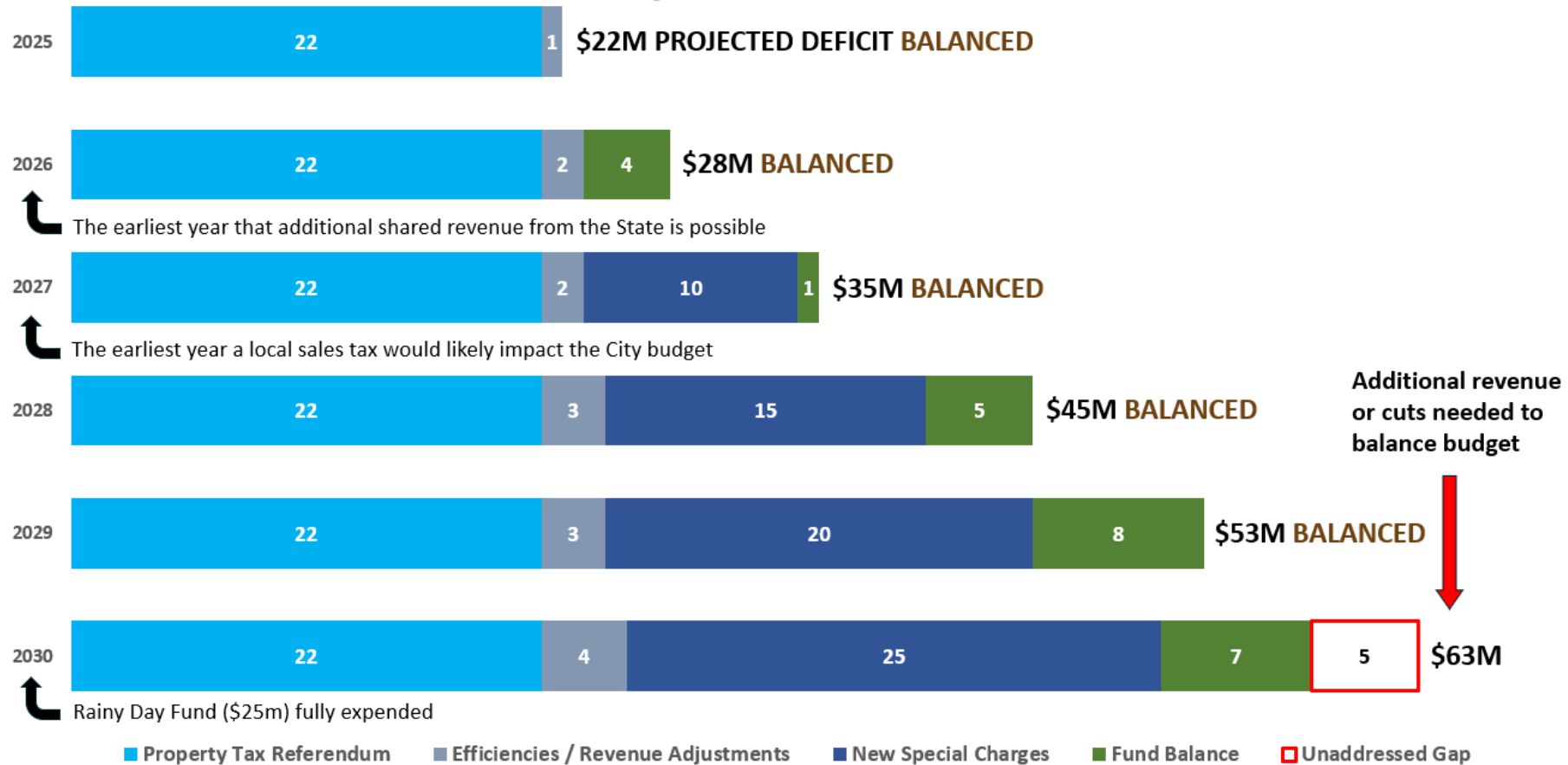
<https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget/2025>

Useful references:

- [Operating Budget Overview](#): Detailed explanation of process for developing the adopted budget, including legislative timeline and impact of property tax levy referendum
- [Operating Executive Summary](#) and [Budget Outlook Page](#): Background on the structural deficit, options presented in the executive budget, and decision points

# The 2025 Budget included a 5-year outlook

## With A Referendum, Madison Can Avoid Significant Cuts or the Need for More Revenue for Another Five years



# Key Dates for 2026 Budget Development

	Capital	Operating
<b>Agency Request Period</b>	March 18 – April 18	Jun 16- July 18
<b>Agency Requests and Service Level Priorities Available on Webpage</b>	Week of May 5	Week of August 4
<b>Executive Budget introduced to Common Council (CC)</b>	Tuesday, September 2	Tuesday, October 7
<b>Finance Committee (FC) Briefings</b>	September 8 & 9	October 13 & 14
<b>FC Amendment Meeting</b>	Monday, September 29	Monday, October 27
<b>CC Amendment Week</b>	October 27 – November 5	
<b>CC Budget Adoption Meetings</b>	November 11 – 13	

# 2026 Budget Information

The [2026 Budget website](#) will be updated as we complete each phase.

We are in the process of procuring a **digital budget book** software.

- The 2026 operating budget book will be web-based. It will include options to print to PDF, but web-version will be the default.
- This is a big change, but will result in big improvements to accessibility and transparency. It will also include new data visualizations and interactive features.
- We will provide more information on the new tool later in the year.

## 2026 Budget

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### Capital Budget

- Budget Kickoff  
March 18, 2025
- Agency Requests  
April 18, 2025
- Executive Budget  
September 2, 2025
- Finance Committee Hearings  
September 8, 9, & 29, 2025
- Common Council Hearings  
November 11-13, 2025
- Adopted Budget  
January 2026

### Operating Budget

- Budget Kickoff  
June 16, 2025
- Agency Requests  
July 18, 2025
- Executive Budget  
October 7, 2025
- Finance Committee Hearings  
October 13, 14, & 27, 2025
- Common Council Hearings  
November 11-13, 2025
- Adopted Budget  
January 2026

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget/2026>

# Operating Budget Cost to Continue

**Cost to continue** is the first step of the budget process. Finance meets with all agencies to understand what it will cost to provide the **same level of services** as the current year in the upcoming year.

- Cost to continue **does include** estimated personnel costs (planned COLA increases, estimated benefit rate increases), estimated debt service, contractually required costs (e.g. increases to multi-year contracts)
- Cost to continue **does not include** proposed expansion of services or new services or contracts

## Timeline

- March 31 – April 11: Finance + Agencies complete CTC analysis
- April 14 – 25: Finance + Agencies meet
- April 28 – May 9: Finance compiles final estimates

# Briefing the Finance Committee

Tentative dates for future briefings and presentations on the 2026 Budget

FC Date	Topic
2/17/2025	2026 Budget Overview
3/3/2025	
3/17/2025	Capital Budget Guidance Overview
4/7/2025	
4/28/2025	
5/12/2025	Capital Request Overview
5/27/2025	Cost to Continue Estimates & Budget Outlook
6/9/2025	
6/23/2025	Operating Budget Guidance
7/7/2025	
7/28/2025	
8/25/2025	Operating Request Overview
9/8/2025; 9/9/2025	FC Agency capital briefings (9/8 includes regular business)
9/29/2025	FC capital amendments (include regular business)
10/13/2025; 10/14/2025	FC Agency operating briefings (10/13 includes regular business)
10/27/2025	FC capital amendments (include regular business)



# Common Council Engagement

- **March:** Finance Dept will update the educational materials on the “2025 Outlook” webpage by end of March
- **April - May:** Coordinate with Common Council office and CC Leadership on developing a schedule and plan for briefing the Common Council
- **May – August:** Ongoing engagement with FC and CC on budget development (may include staff presentations to CC or CCEC, committee of the whole discussions, or other formats)