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City of Atlanta FY2026 Budget: Key Departmental Recaps



June 10, 2025 < <https://atlbudget.org/2025/city-of-atlanta-fy2026-budget-key-departmental-recaps/> >

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Intro

On Monday, June 3, 2025, the Atlanta City Council unanimously approved a \$3 billion total operating budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). The budget includes \$975 million in spending from the General Fund – the City’s most flexible funding that primarily comes from local taxes and covers most City services — a 14% increase from the \$853 million budgeted last year. Despite initial concerns about escalating expenditures, the Council made only [minor adjustments](#) < <https://civicatlanta.org/blog/2025-05-25-city-budget-set-for->

adoption> to Mayor Andre Dickens <
<https://civicatlanta.org/people/andre-dickens>> 's proposal.

The approval follows a \$33 million deficit <
<https://civicatlanta.org/blog/2024-12-15-projected-city-budget-deficit>> earlier in this fiscal year, primarily attributed to police overtime and heightened security costs at the City's new Public Safety Training Center. To address the deficit, the City implemented a 5% spending cut across departments which included the elimination of approximately 150 full-time positions.

Notably, the new budget allocates nearly 20% more funding to the Atlanta Police Department <
<https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/police/>> and over a 37% increase for the Department of Corrections <
<https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/corrections/>>, aligning with actual expenditures from this past year.

In addition to the budget, the Council adopted a resolution on Monday calling for enhanced fiscal oversight measures – including a detailed analysis of the overspending, monthly budget briefings (replacing the current quarterly updates), and greater involvement in the early stages of the next budget cycle.

City Council Finance Committee Chair Howard Shook told the AJC <
[https://www.ajc.com/news/2025/06/atlanta-city-council-oks-budget-calls-for-more-oversight-into-spending/?](https://www.ajc.com/news/2025/06/atlanta-city-council-oks-budget-calls-for-more-oversight-into-spending/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
[utm_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.ajc.com/news/2025/06/atlanta-city-council-oks-budget-calls-for-more-oversight-into-spending/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)> that the City plans to hire an external consultant to review missteps with the City's Fiscal Year 2025 budget

which he described at a recent Committee meeting as “[an epic fail < https://www.youtube.com/live/01n-LLvdgkg?si=elL3Ny_uX8e7WECS&t=5321>](https://www.youtube.com/live/01n-LLvdgkg?si=elL3Ny_uX8e7WECS&t=5321).” Shook, who is retiring after more than two decades on the Council, remarked, “An error is not a mistake until you repeat it.”

In his remarks to the Council at the end of Monday’s meeting, Mayor Dickens characterized the budget as reaffirming the City’s commitments to public safety, affordable housing, and youth programs. He did not directly address the Council’s calls for increased oversight.

Atlanta Police Department (APD)

FY2026 APD Budget:	Percentage of Total Budget	Change from FY2025
\$307.9M	31.6%	19.4% or \$54.5M

Worth Noting: APD’s budget is \$54.5M higher than the next three largest departments – Fire, Transportation, and Parks & Recreation – combined.

[Learn more about the Police Department’s budget < https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/police/>](https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/police/)

APD's budget includes \$246.6M for personnel — a 19% or \$39.9M increase from FY2025 — with 53% going towards salaries for sworn police officers. APD currently has 1,750 sworn officers < <https://www.youtube.com/live/Lf76Ylu1BAI?feature=shared&t=1309>> including recruits, and that there were 110 sworn officer candidates awaiting onboarding.

Due to lower turnover and higher recruitment rates, APD will phase out its “recapture program” < <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/atlanta/apd-is-getting-rid-program-that-helped-keep-department-staffed-citing-no-more-need/HNJ2VUTQOJEN7JOI6R4Y2NL3IM/>> which has rehired retired officers to deal with staffing shortages since 2015. Schierbaum stated APD currently has 66 recaptured officers – earning a salary in addition to their full City pension – and that ending the program could result in savings of \$6M.

While purchased/contracted services account for only 8.7% or \$26.8M of the budget, this category represents an 87% or \$12.5M increase from 2025. Schierbaum attributed the jump partially to contractual cost increases with Axon for body cameras and footage storage, as well as maintenance of security cameras provided by the Atlanta Police Foundation (APF).

Atlanta Fire Rescue Department (AFRD)

FY2026 AFRD Budget	Percentage of Total Budget	Increase from FY2025
\$137.3M	14.1%	16.1% or \$19M

Worth Noting: AFRD also receives financial support from the non-profit [Atlanta Fire Rescue Foundation \(AFRF\)](https://www.atlfrf.org/), which funds fire station technology upgrades and minor facility repairs, while also supporting firefighters with rent and downpayment assistance for first-time homebuyers. Since 2023, City Councilmembers have donated over \$2.2M to AFRF.

[Learn more about the Fire Rescue Department’s budget](https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/fire-rescue/)

Council President [Doug Shipman](https://civicatlanta.org/people/doug-shipman) asked [whether AFRD is relying too much on overtime](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=2792) to cover staff shortages, [pointing out](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=2667) that the percentage of AFRD’s budget for overtime and temporary help (14%) is nearly equal to the percentage of vacant firefighter positions (15%). Earlier in the presentation, Fire Chief Roderick Smith explained that quickly filling firefighter vacancies is difficult due to new recruit training lasting 12-14 months Shipman

stated that relying on overtime is “[a choice < https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=2764>](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=2764)” and will not lead to fewer vacancies in the upcoming year.

AFRD’s [goals for FY2026 < https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=708>](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=708) include continuing reconstruction work on two fire stations, starting reconstruction work on two others, and developing a ten-year plan to prioritize future station replacements and renovations. These station reconstruction projects are funded through the City’s [\\$750M Moving Atlanta Forward program < https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/moving-atlanta-forward-2022-infrastructure-package>](https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/moving-atlanta-forward-2022-infrastructure-package) – approved by voters in May 2022 – and are not reflected in AFRD’s operating fund.

AFRD also hopes to [order nine new vehicles < https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=778>](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=778), which would also be funded through capital budgets. An audit released in August 2024 found that 33% of AFRD’s vehicles were being used beyond their 15- to 20-year lifecycles, and that the City did not have a fleet replacement strategy or stable funding source for vehicle purchases. Since November 2023, the Council has authorized the purchase of 31 new vehicles which can take up to three years to receive.

Department of Corrections (DOC)

FY2026 DOC Budget: Percentage of Total Budget Increase from FY2022		
\$27.9M	2.9%	37% or \$7.6M

Worth Noting: Despite a significant decrease in the DOC budget from FY2018 (\$33 million) — the last budget adopted before the City Council eliminated cash bail requirements for most minor, non-violent offenses — to FY2022 (\$14 million), DOC’s budget has doubled between FY2022 and FY2026.

[Learn more about the Department of Correction’s budget < https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/corrections/>](https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/corrections/)

Personnel spending accounts for \$7.2M of the budget increase and includes a \$1.3M increase in overtime pay and temporary help. When Councilmember [Alex Wan < https://civicatlanta.org/people/alex-wan>](https://civicatlanta.org/people/alex-wan) asked [why these increases are not going towards full-time staffing < https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=4883>](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=4883), Corrections Chief Elder Dancy cited unpredictability in the number of patients at Grady Memorial Hospital’s Detention Center – which is managed by DOC to provide medical treatment to people incarcerated at Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC).

When Council President [Doug Shipman](https://civicatlanta.org/people/doug-shipman) <<https://civicatlanta.org/people/doug-shipman>> asked for a deeper picture as to [why DOC's budget had doubled since FY2022](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=5742) <<https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=5742>>, Dancy explained the average daily population at ACDC has increased “from the teens to roughly 120,” along with greater staffing needs at the Grady Detention Center after the City eliminated a private security contract and Grady started requiring one corrections officer per incarcerated person.

When Councilmember [Dustin Hillis](https://civicatlanta.org/people/dustin-hillis) <<https://civicatlanta.org/people/dustin-hillis>> requested clarification as to [which expenses the City covers](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=5433) <<https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=5433>> under the current lease agreement with Fulton County to house up to 700 of the County's detainees at ACDC, Dancy confirmed that the agreement — which is set to expire in December 2026 — [requires the City to cover maintenance costs](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=5485) <<https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=5485>> for the portions of the building used by the County. According to Chief Financial Officer Mohamed Balla, the lease [generated an estimated \\$7-8M](https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=4824) <<https://www.youtube.com/live/4X6Bb9JuAfU?feature=shared&t=4824>> in 2025. While proceeds from the lease help support DOC operations, the money goes into the General Fund to be used across departments.

Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT)

FY2026 ATLDOT Budget	Percentage of Total Budget	Increase from FY2025
\$58.6M	6%	13.4% or \$6.9M

Worth Noting: ATLDOT’s personnel expenses are “split-funded” between operating and capital budgets based on the scope of work that these positions support. While ATLDOT’s budget lists a total breakout of 425.65 positions, where funding comes from was not specified or available during ATLDOT’s briefing.

[Learn more about the Department of Transportation’s budget < https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/transportation/>](https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/transportation/)

ATLDOT’s budget includes \$3.3M for safety-related road and sidewalk improvements recommended through the City’s Vision Zero plan to eliminate pedestrian fatalities. When Councilmember [Dustin Hillis < https://civicatlanta.org/people/dustin-hillis>](https://civicatlanta.org/people/dustin-hillis) asked for specifics of the [“very meager” allocation < https://www.youtube.com/live/yqrLUKiboco?feature=shared&t=7441>](https://www.youtube.com/live/yqrLUKiboco?feature=shared&t=7441), Department leadership responded that these funds would go towards “quick implementation” strategies such as roadway restriping and [centerline hardening < https://ssti.us/2020/07/30/centerline-hardening-protects-pedestrian-from-left-turning-vehicles/>](https://ssti.us/2020/07/30/centerline-hardening-protects-pedestrian-from-left-turning-vehicles/) (physical barriers like bollards, curbs, or raised medians) to protect pedestrians and cyclists.

In October 2024, the City Council adopted a \$120M bond package
<
https://atlantacityga.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?ID=36109> to fund projects including roadway resurfacing, sidewalk repairs and installation, and new bicycle lanes in Downtown ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Councilmember Matt Westmoreland <
<https://civicatlanta.org/people/matt-westmoreland>> asked ATLDOT Commissioner Solomon Caviness if the Vision Zero standards are being incorporated <
<https://www.youtube.com/live/yqrLUKiboco?feature=shared&t=6675>> into these bond-funded projects. Caviness claimed that the bond only covers roadway resurfacing and restriping plans. Westmoreland requested more clarity on how the standards will be incorporated, and Caviness stated he would follow up with Council when the project plans are completed.

Department of City Planning (DCP)

FY2026 DCP Budget:	Percentage of Total Budget	Change from FY2025
\$26.9M	2.8%	1.3% or \$348.7K

Worth Noting: While the General Fund has increased by over 50% since FY2018, the DCP budget has only increased by 15.2%.

[Learn more about the Department of City Planning's budget <https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/city-planning/>](https://atlbudget.org/city-of-atlanta-fy2026/city-planning/)

DCP's budget cuts \$678.4K (20%) from purchased/contract services, which Commissioner Jahnee Prince explained is the result of a future effort to bring building permitting — which are currently supported by external contractors — completely in-house as a cost-saving measure.

Despite this goal, DCP's budget also includes a \$206.7K reduction in total salaries. Councilmember [Alex Wan <https://civicatlanta.org/people/alex-wan>](https://civicatlanta.org/people/alex-wan) expressed concern that the operating budget would be too low to oversee general day-to-day operations, including permitting services, while also supporting priority public-facing initiatives for FY2026. These initiatives include:

- Make final updates to the pending Tree Protection and Short-Term Rental ordinances
- Complete and test the City's first comprehensive zoning code update since 1983
- Launch the City's first formal Small Area Planning Program to develop neighborhood-specific plans in collaboration with NPUs and other community leaders

Referencing [House Bill 461 \(2024\) <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/64534>](https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/64534), which requires building permit revenues be used solely for permitting-related costs,

Councilmembers [Dustin Hillis < https://civicatlanta.org/people/dustin-hillis>](https://civicatlanta.org/people/dustin-hillis) and [Liliana Bakhtiari < https://civicatlanta.org/people/liliana-bakhtiari>](https://civicatlanta.org/people/liliana-bakhtiari) questioned [why the projected \\$35–\\$38M in FY2025 permit fees aren’t fully reflected in DCP’s operating budget < https://www.youtube.com/live/NAQPfknYTpY?feature=shared&t=1547>](https://www.youtube.com/live/NAQPfknYTpY?feature=shared&t=1547). Commissioner Prince and Chief Financial Officer Mohamed Balla explained that permit revenues are distributed across multiple departments involved in permitting — like Watershed, Transportation, and Information Management. Balla noted total costs exceed revenues but couldn’t provide a department-by-department breakdown.

During DCP’s briefing, there was no mention of investments related to the City’s Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU). Some advocates have called for more funding in DCP’s budget to enable the Department to strengthen NPU engagement in the City’s yearly budget process, as outlined in the City’s Code of Ordinances.

Want to learn more about Atlanta’s budget?

Check out some recent pieces by our partners:

- [Atlanta City Council unanimously approves Mayor Dickens’ \\$3 billion budget < https://atlantaciviccircle.org/2025/06/03/atlanta-city-](https://atlantaciviccircle.org/2025/06/03/atlanta-city-)

[council-unanimously-approves-mayor-dickens-3-billion-budget/>](#) (Atlanta Civic Circle, June 3, 2025)

- [Where's my project? City Council asks, ATLDOT answers < https://www.letspropelatl.org/where_s_my_project_city_council_asks_atldot_answers>](#) (PropelATL, May 29, 2025)
- [ANALYSIS: How accessible and transparent is Atlanta's budget process? < https://atlantaciviccircle.org/2025/05/28/analysis-accessible-transparent-atlanta-budget-process/>](#) (Atlanta Civic Circle, May 28, 2025)
- [Atlanta's Police Budget Could Increase by \\$54.6 Million < https://atlanta.capitalbnews.org/atl-police-budget-major-increase/>](#) (Capital B Atlanta, May 19, 2025)
- **ATLBudget Briefings from Canopy Atlanta / Atlanta Documenters**
 - [Budget Commission: Fiscal Year 2026 Approval < https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ie_K1w-H7dx496QxSUQDCSwQGZogS2btlnnJTNB25s/preview?tab=t.0>](#) (June 2, 2025)
 - [Atlanta Department of Transportation < https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QuCjN0bzNvfOs_0XzrLnixkdWZ5oNotKYMFJjITCJ7k/preview?tab=t.0>](#) (May 20, 2025)
 - [Invest Atlanta < https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-wN5Ou-ZZ2W42u1rLoMjG-swDUaVoTSX2leoFGXGXik/preview?tab=t.0>](#) (May 15, 2025)

- *Department of Public Works <*
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k0I4UwHi1sz6YXKjaoU4fiRXfIR3c7-SkdRaAriuna8/preview?tab=t.0>
(May 15, 2025)
- *Fiscal Condition of the City <*
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VIrb2BLsB9B0P2bIhn-jL5YQdGv_9qyx7E7i44oumig/_preview?tab=t.0
(May 6, 2025)

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