



ISAAC B. "ZAC" BEARS
President

City of Medford

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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To: Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn
From: City Council President Isaac B. "Zac" Bears
Date: March 25, 2025
Re: City Council FY26 Budget Recommendations

Dear Mayor Lungo-Koehn,

Below are the collective recommendations of the City Council to include in the Fiscal Year 2026 City Budget. Additionally, I have attached the individual recommendations of councilors as a separate PDF document. We look forward to working with you and your team to include these recommendations in the budget this year.

1. Maintain Level-Service Funding for MPS and City Departments

- a. Meet the School Committee's budget request for the Medford Public Schools and the Board of Library Trustees' request for the Medford Public Library
- b. For city departments, Councilors identified specific focuses on the Community Liaisons Program, Translation Services, Rodent Control, and All Grant Funded Positions in PDS and Health Departments
- c. **Estimated Impact: TBD based on Preliminary Budget Meetings**

New Ongoing Expenditures

2. Increase Funding for Assessing Department to Implement Residential Exemption

- a. The Council has voted to pursue a Residential Exemption for the FY26 tax year and the Assessing Department has indicated that 1 to 2 additional full-time staff members would be necessary to process exemption applications.
- b. **Estimated Impact: \$100,000 to \$200,000**

3. Increase Funding for DPW, Engineering, and Facilities Departments for Improved Road and Bike Safety, Tree Planting, and Capital Improvements

- a. Fund the recommendations of the Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission, including but not limited to:
 - i. Additional traffic engineer focused on walking, biking, and transit to implement Vision Zero and Complete Streets
 - ii. Increase funding for DPW staff positions for restriping, adjusting signal timing, patching potholes, and shrinking repair backlog

- iii. Budget to purchase install and maintain road safety markings, signage, and bike-related equipment
 - b. Fund a half-time DPW volunteer coordinator for a volunteer tree planting program
 - c. **Estimated Impact: Minimum \$250,000**
- 4. Fund Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and Office Manager in Recreation Department and a Citywide Inclusion Specialist**
- a. The Council has been working alongside residents with disabilities and their families to improve city services and inclusion across the city and community, which has identified these staffing needs.
 - b. **Estimated Impact: \$200,000**
- 5. Fund Fire Department Dive Team Training and Equipment**
- a. Given our extensive waterways, the Council believes it is a priority to add a dive team in the Fire Department. Councilor Lazzaro received the financial cost estimate during discussions with Fire Chief Evans.
 - b. **Estimated Impact: \$122,933**
- 6. Increase Funding for City Solicitor Position**
- a. Make a further increase in the solicitor position salary to ensure competitiveness and finally fill the role that has been vacant for too long.
 - b. **Estimated Impact: \$30,000**

One-Time Expenses

- 7. Nexus Studies for Inclusionary Zoning, Linkage Fees, and TDM**
- a. These nexus studies are necessary to update our key affordable housing programs and significantly increase linkage fee revenue given that the current rates and ordinance have not been updated in 30 years.
 - b. This one-time cost could be funded by stabilization funds or free cash reserves.
 - c. **Estimated Impact: \$100,000 to \$200,000**
- 8. Planning to Update City's Financial Software**
- a. Appropriate seed money to develop a clear plan and timeline for updating city financial software and payroll systems or to hire additional staff to speed up timeliness of financial reporting updates, calculation of retroactive pay, and other payroll and finance updates.
 - b. This one-time cost could be funded by stabilization funds or free cash reserves.
 - c. **Estimated Impact: \$100,000 to \$200,000**

Sincerely yours,
Zac Bears

cc: Chief of Staff Nina Nazarian and Finance Director Bob Dickinson