



KIT COLLINS
Vice President

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Mr. Clerk,

I am submitting my preliminary FY26 budget requests, roughly in order of priority, ahead of our Committee of the Whole to discuss City Councilors' budget recommendations on Tuesday, March 18.

I am grateful to the voters for approving Questions 7 and 8 in the November 2024 election. These critical investments will help us protect capacity for the Medford Public Schools and the DPW in the midst of escalating inflation and escalating non-negotiable costs that burden residents and City budgets alike.

I am also grateful for past funding decisions that are enabling the City Council to execute a comprehensive zoning update this year. I believe that in the future, the City will see a large return on this investment – not only in unquantifiables, such as resident quality of life and making strides to combat housing scarcity, but in new growth, revenue from permitting fees, and incentives-driven contributions to local climate-resiliency infrastructure.

In the meantime, especially in this moment of great national insecurity, as the federal government aggressively rolls back many important supports and programs that Medford residents (and people all around the nation) rely upon, it is crucial that we refuse to stall or backslide when it comes to supporting our residents; making life better, easier, and safer for members of our community; and making Medford an ever-more resilient, inclusive, and vibrant place to live and work.

These convictions guide my priorities for our FY26 operating budget and amendments to our Capital Improvements Plan.

1. Meet School Committee budgetary request for **Medford Public Schools**.
1. Meet **Library Department** budgetary request and maintain at least level service and hours of operation.
2. Fund **two additional traffic engineers** (estimated budget impact: \$192,000.00) within the Department of Traffic and Transportation to focus on walking, biking, transit, and the implementation of **Vision Zero** and **Complete Streets** policies, including:
 - a. applying for state and federal grants for transformative road redesign and bicycle and pedestrian safety projects;

- b. driver and cyclist education on rules of the road, how to lawfully and safely share the road with cyclists, and newer traffic laws; and
 - c. assisting with routine pothole maintenance and restriping.
3. Fund a **therapeutic recreation specialist** and **full-time office manager for Medford Recreation** to increase fully-accessible recreation options for youth with disabilities and begin building the capacity towards an Accessibility Master Plan for Medford. (Estimated budget impact: \$125,000.00)
4. Increase budgeted amount for **City Solicitor** salary to maintain competitiveness with neighboring municipalities. (Estimated budget impact: \$36,000.00)
5. **Maintain grant-funded personnel** in Health Department, Office of Outreach and Prevention, and Office of Planning, Development and Sustainability.
6. Increase **capital spending earmark** for expansion of Medford's network of separated, protected bike lanes, completion of Medford's Bike Master Plan, and design studies for Vision Zero and Complete Streets policies.
7. Fund installation and maintenance of **road safety equipment and interventions** within DPW budget, including:
 - a. bike racks and flex posts along all squares, corridors and along key access points to bike lane network;
 - b. increased road signage especially at known high-speed or otherwise dangerous intersections and crossings;
 - c. implementation of planned new crosswalks and crosswalk improvements, especially at known high-speed or otherwise dangerous intersections and crossings.

In addition, I will repeat my requests from FY24, regarding programs that I ask and recommend the Administration continue to plan for and study:

- Implementing Massachusetts Paid Family & Medical Leave program for all City employees
 - Increase City's competitiveness with private employers and other municipalities
 - Along with implementation of Compensation & Classification Study findings, help attract and retain competitive candidates in City positions to achieve fuller staffing and increase capacity across departments
 - Provide a positive and needed benefit for municipal workers
- Review Finance Department software upgrade options and develop of implementation scenarios
 - Look into software and financial tools that would increase capacity and effectiveness of Finance Department and reduce workflow bottlenecks, especially as it relates to payroll and retro pay processing; reporting; analysis; expanding capacity for long-term and capital planning
 - Research budgetary impact of potential upgrades and how to implement these investments

Respectfully,

Kit Collins
Medford City Council Vice President