



Budget in Brief

Fiscal Year 2026

AN OPEN LETTER FROM WEST PALM BEACH MAYOR KEITH A. JAMES

Mayor
Keith A. James



City Commission
(From Left:)
Christy Fox
Christina Lambert
Joseph Peduzzi
Cathleen Ward
Shalonda Warren



City Administrator
Faye W. Johnson

Assistant City Administrators
Armando Fana
Jose-Luis Rodriguez

Chief Financial Officer
Bridget M. Souffrant

Budget Office
Kyle Roberts
Rosanna Santana

Dear West Palm Beach neighbors,

From day one of becoming Mayor, I have said public safety is our number one priority. This statement is not just a good sound bite. It is the guiding principle for the fiscal decisions I make as CEO of this city. As reflected in the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) and prior year budgets, I have ensured that the allocation of taxpayers' dollars is prioritized to protecting lives and personal property. The FY26 budget significantly increases the staffing level, technology and equipment in our Police and Fire operations. By making such a sizeable investment, we will be better equipped to serve our city's fast-growing population.

The City's adopted FY26 general fund budget is \$283 million. This is an increase of approximately \$18.8 million which includes \$11.6 million in additional property tax revenue or an increase of 9.4% in property valuation. The remaining \$7.2 million is generated from the other three sources of revenue that make up the general fund: 1) licenses and permit fees, 2) charges for services and 3) funds from other governmental agencies such as the State. This \$11.6 million of additional tax revenue enhanced our ability to meet the increased safety and security needs of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Of the \$11.6 million, approximately \$10.5 million was allocated to public safety to fund mission critical needs. The Police Department is receiving 27 Sworn Officers (highest number in one-budget cycle in city's recent history), three (3) additional 911 Call Takers, five (5) professional staff positions, significant enhancements to Officer training and equipment, restoration of the Police Athletic League (PAL) which has been defunct for several years, continuation of the Police Explorer program whose funding had expired, expansion of the Missing Child Tracking Brackets initiative and a dedicated Officer recruitment initiative. On the other side of the public safety coin, the Fire Department is receiving three (3) Fire Captains, three (3) Operations Lieutenants, one (1) Lt. Fire Inspector, continuation of the Community Paramedic Program whose funding had expired, three (3) professional staff positions and 15 existing Firefighter positions previously funded by the SAFER grant. Our cadre of Firefighters is being expanded through the addition of four (4) new Firefighter positions funded by Fire Assessment Fees and 17 new Firefighter positions funded by a recently awarded \$3.2 Million SAFER grant.



Keeping public safety first and foremost facilitates enjoyment of the high quality of life (QOL) that makes our city special. The FY26 budget also provides for continuation of the arts and culture our city has become known for, its quality entertainment venues such as the re-opening of the iconic Sunset Lounge in the Historic Northwest, the Winter in Paradise and Nights in Northwood marquee events, economic development opportunities for new and existing businesses as well as training opportunities for residents pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors. On the education front, we are continuing our elementary grant funding initiative in addition to making a significant investment in the collection of books, music, movies and digital resources offered at the Mandel Public Library which also provides educational programming offered through the Mandel Mobile unit. Our QOL initiatives don't end there, as the FY26 budget also continues to provide affordable and workforce housing development incentives, services for unhoused individuals in our community, ongoing activities at our 57 parks and recreational facilities, maintaining our streets and roadways, providing efficient sanitation services and ensuring the availability of clean and safe drinking water.

Along with strengthening public safety and quality of life, we are also ensuring that our internal operating and governance structure is strong and sustainable. The FY26 budget addresses workload challenges in our Procurement and Human Resources operations. It also includes the second year of our newly created Information Technology Replacement Program and enhances the maintenance of city buildings and facilities.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of City staff, Administration and the City Commission on this public safety focused balanced FY26 General Fund budget. As always, I also would like to thank you, our West Palm Beach neighbors, for participating in our community budget meetings and encourage you to continue to learn more about the City's budget through the Finance Department's page on our website, wpb.org/finance.

Our collective hard work has made our vision of becoming a Community of Opportunity for All into a reality!

Yours in service,

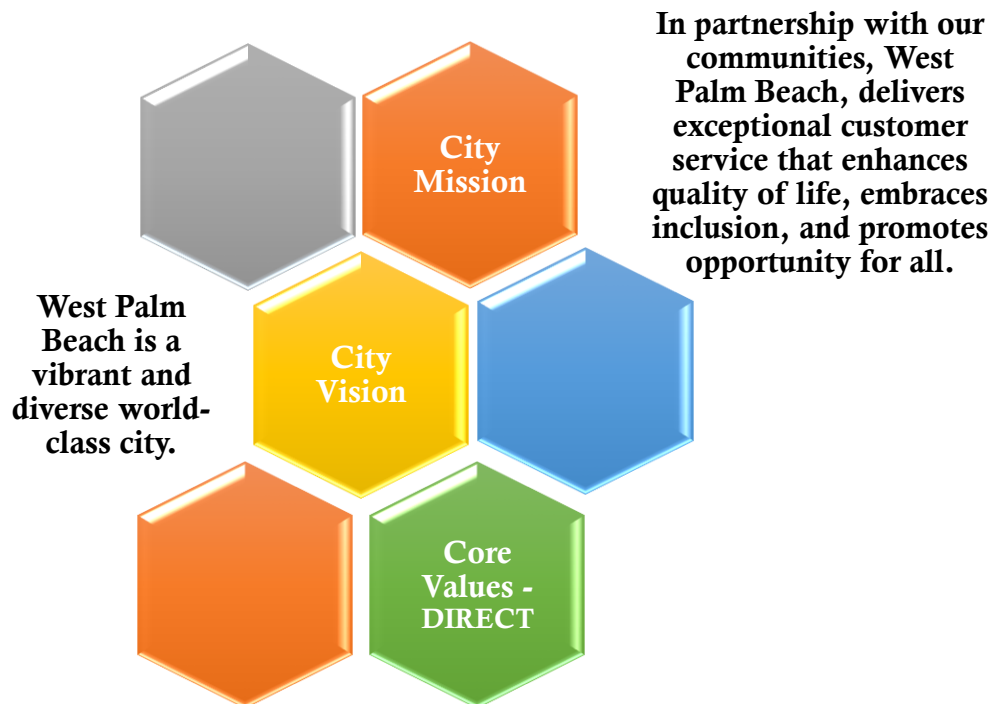
Keith A. James, Mayor

About the Budget

The City of West Palm Beach's FY26 Budget in Brief is provided to serve as an overview of the City's budget. This document provides a summary of the highlights to the budget, revenues the City expects to receive and planned areas where the money will be spent.

The adopted budget is a deliberate balance of revenues and expenditures prepared in accordance with Florida's statutory Truth in Millage process and best serves the City's prioritization for provision of core services and commission initiatives. State law requires that the City adopt a balanced budget prior to the beginning of its fiscal year on October 1st.

The FY26 budget was developed to assure that fundamental services are appropriately delivered, and programs are maintained at current or higher levels. The budget is a responsible allocation of public resources that maintains the City of West Palm Beach as a safe, attractive and vibrant community for the satisfaction of its residents and visitors.



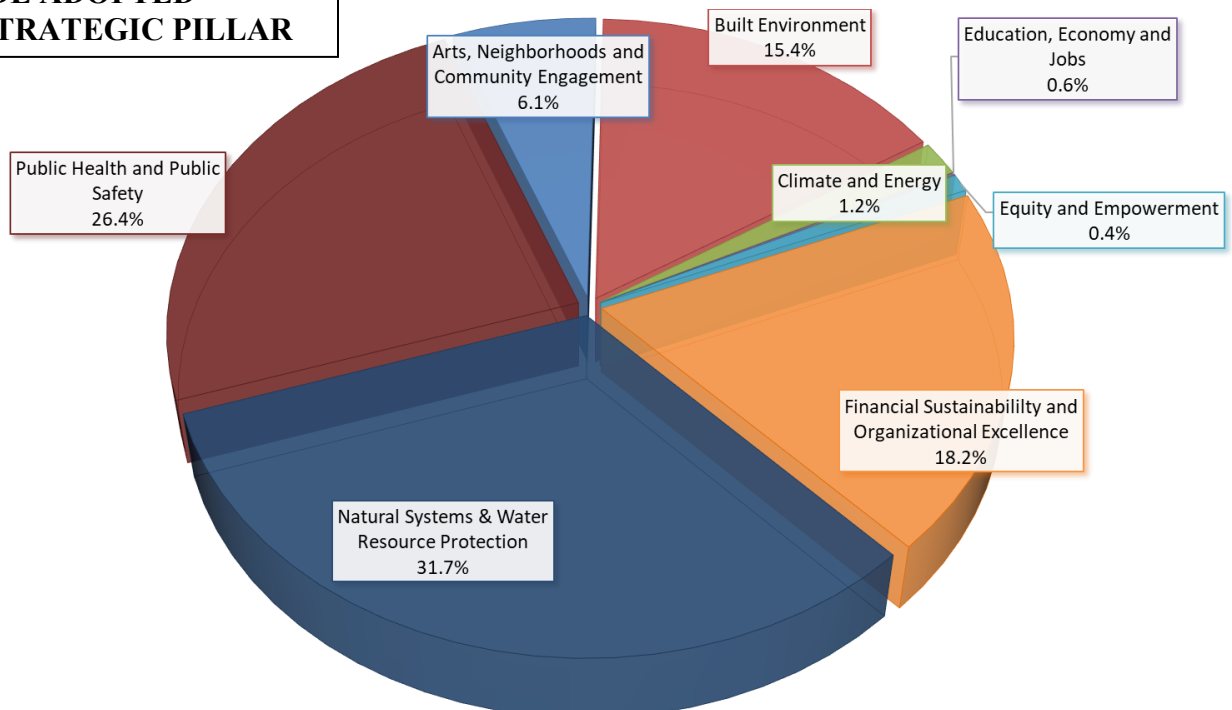
- Diversity:** We find strength in celebrating our differences, promoting mutual Understanding and inclusiveness.
- Integrity:** We demonstrate the ethical principles underlying public service; believing honesty and follow-through support credibility.
- Respect:** We treat our constituents, stakeholders, and each other with dignity, courtesy and esteem.
- Excellence:** We deliver high-quality services in a friendly manner, based on an understanding of our constituents and their needs.
- Collaboration:** We build partnerships, which ensure our community's success.
- Transparency:** We recognize that openness, accountability and two-way communication makes mutual trust possible and invites participation.

Strategic Pillars for Success

The Mayor and City Commission have designated eight strategic pillars as the foundation for future budgeting and resource allocation. Seven of the pillars align with the tenets of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for cities and communities. An eighth pillar was added to emphasize high performance and financial sustainability in the delivery of city services. The pillars reflect the Mayor and Commission's policy direction to city staff based on community needs.

Arts, Neighborhoods & Community Engagement	•A range of arts and cultural resources that encourage community participation.
Built Environment	•Adopt an integrated approach toward urban planning through mixed-use development, efficient transportation and better connectivity
Climate & Energy	•Reduce climate impacts through adaptation and mitigation efforts and increase resource efficiency.
Education, Economy & Jobs	•Create equitably shared prosperity and access to quality jobs.
Equity & Empowerment	•Equitably address the needs of all people.
Natural Systems	•Cities depends on nature and ecosystem services to sustain and enhance the quality of life.
Public Health & Public Safety	•Strengthen communities to be healthy, resilient and safe places for residents and businesses.
Financial Sustainability& Organizational Excellence	•Ensuring a high performing organization that follows best operational practices and supports the city's financial stability.

FY26 CITYWIDE ADOPTED BUDGET BY STRATEGIC PILLAR



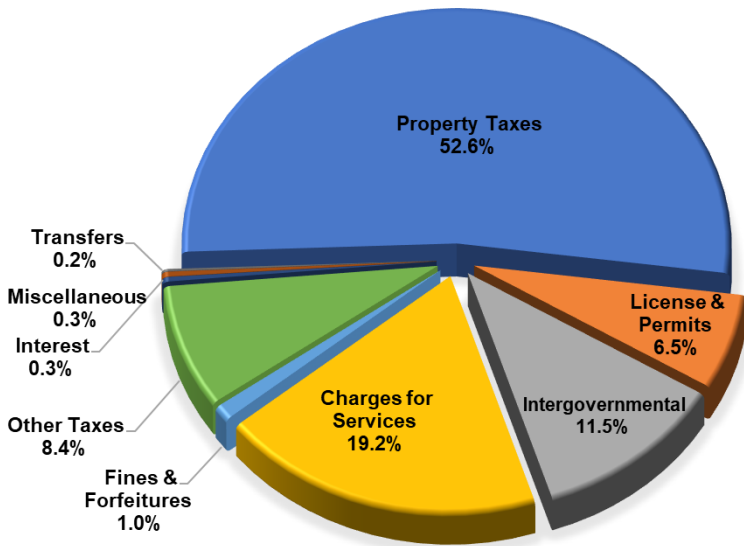
Where the Money Comes From

The City of West Palm Beach has an approved total FY26 Citywide Budget of **\$783,389,859** which is an 1.8% increase over last year's budget. The total citywide budget includes a General Fund budget of **\$283,563,050** which is an 7.4% increase over last year.

The City continues to experience growth and stability in its revenue streams with increasingly new development and new assessed value added to the tax rolls. Property Tax revenue accounts for 52.6% of the General Fund revenue sources. The \$8.1308 adopted millage rate will generate \$149M in FY26.

FY26 Revenue highlights include:

- ✚ Property Taxes – increased by 8.4% or \$11.5M
- ✚ Charges for Services – increased by 13.3% or \$6.4M
- ✚ Intergovernmental Revenues – increased by 3.9% or \$1.2M



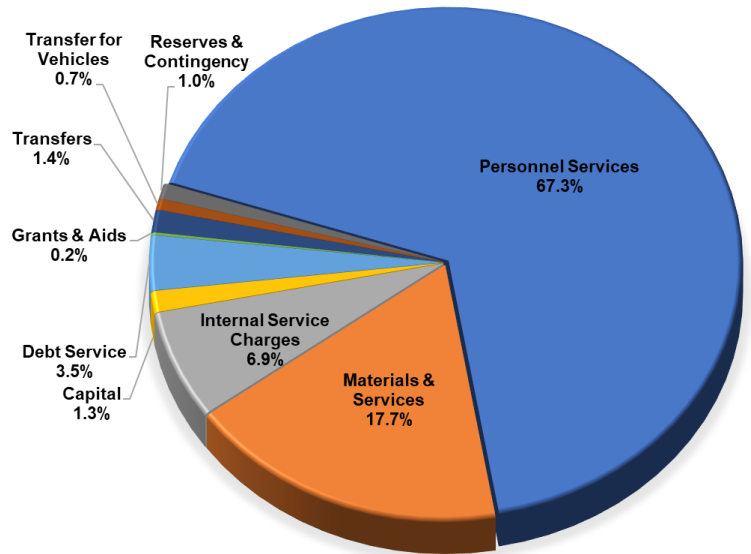
Revenue Sources	FY25 Adopted Budget	FY26 Adopted Budget	\$ Variance 25 vs 26
Property Taxes	137,502,314	149,051,900	11,549,586
License & Permits	18,092,407	18,559,603	467,196
Intergovernmental	31,242,132	32,474,378	1,232,246
Charges for Services	47,992,653	54,385,307	6,392,654
Fines & Forfeitures	2,901,860	2,911,860	10,000
Other Taxes	23,150,000	23,853,729	703,729
Interest	1,012,497	902,719	-109,778
Miscellaneous	1,038,040	941,840	-96,200
Transfers	1,087,494	481,714	-605,780
Total General Fund Revenues	\$264,019,397	\$283,563,050	\$19,543,653

Where the Money Goes

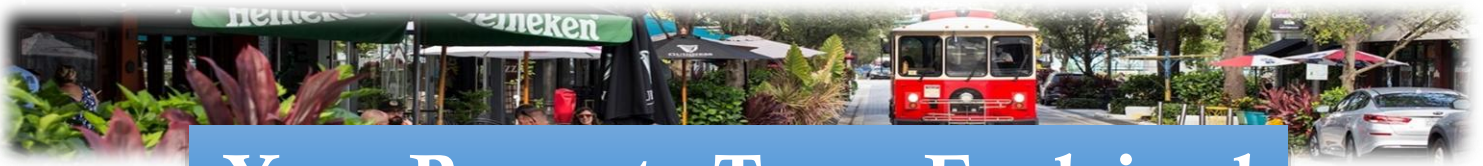
The FY26 General Fund budget prioritizes essential services for our residents and neighborhoods. It will maintain the overall quality of life for residents, help make our community even safer, and promote continued economic development within our city.

Highlighted benefits achieved by this balanced budget include:

- ✚ Maintains all external core services such as police, fire, library, public works, parks and recreation etc.
- ✚ Maintains all internal core services such as fleet, legal, finance, human resources etc.
- ✚ Maintains funding for quality-of-life entertainment events on the waterfront.
- ✚ Maintains funding for budget best practices with the IT Replacement Program, Vehicle Replacement Program and Road improvements.
- ✚ Enhances funding for maintenance of City buildings and facilities.
- ✚ Significant investment in public safety staffing with the addition of 35 positions in the Police Department (27 officers) and 10 new positions within the Fire Department.



Expense Category	FY25 Adopted Budget	FY26 Adopted Budget	\$ Variance 25 vs 26
Personnel Services	181,260,830	190,720,071	9,459,241
Materials & Services	46,077,817	50,308,283	4,230,466
Internal Service Charges	18,465,823	19,525,222	1,059,399
Capital	2,282,000	3,799,957	1,517,957
Debt Service	9,897,500	9,900,500	3,000
Grants & Aids	505,561	460,070	-45,491
Transfers	2,814,866	4,017,969	1,203,103
Transfer for Vehicles	2,000,000	2,000,000	-
Reserves & Contingency	715,000	2,830,978	2,115,978
Total General Fund Expenses	\$264,019,397	\$283,563,050	\$19,543,653



Your Property Taxes Explained

The Property Appraiser provides the City's estimated total assessed taxable value every year by June 1. The City then uses this estimate for budget planning purposes. For the current tax year, the City of West Palm Beach's assessed taxable value is \$25.5 billion which is a 9.4% growth in value and an increase in tax revenue of \$11.5M over last year. This includes new construction of \$614M that was added to the tax roll.



AD VALOREM TAX CALCULATION

The millage rate is the ad valorem tax rate levied per \$1,000 of a property's taxable value. The rate is expressed in mills, which is equal to a 0.1% of the taxable value. Each taxing authority adopts a millage rate every year that appears on the property tax bill.

To calculate the tax levy using a given millage rate, the formula is:

$$\text{Taxable Value}/1,000 \times \text{Millage Rate} = \$ \text{Ad Valorem Tax}$$

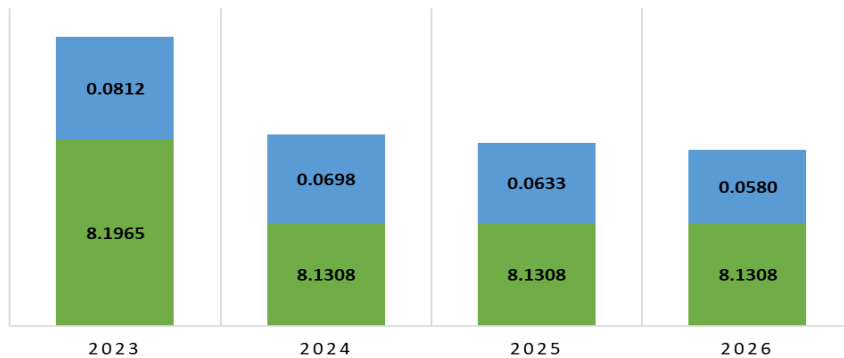
For example, a WPB property with an assessed value of \$400,000 and exemptions of \$50,000 has a taxable value of \$350,000.

The ad valorem tax for WPB would then be:

$$\$350,000/1,000 \times 8.1888 \text{ Mills} = \$2,866$$

CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH MILLAGE RATE HISTORY

■ Operating ■ Debt



127,744

Residents



50,890

Households



83,205

Household Income



57.73

Square Miles



Prepared by the
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