

**MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)**

**Livestream: www.kennesaw-ga.gov/publicmeetings/
June 29, 2026
7:00 PM**

Present	Mayor Derek Easterling Mayor Pro Tem Antonio Jones Councilmember Madelyn Orochena Councilmember Tracey Viars Councilmember Jonathon Bothers Councilmember Anthony Gutierrez-Leon Deputy City Clerk Nicholas Simpson City Manager Jeff Drobney City Attorney Sam Hensley, Jr.
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1. Invocation

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Call to Order

Mayor Derek Easterling called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Council members Madelyn Orochena and Jonathon Bothers participated in the special budget work session via teleconference, respectively.

4. Announcements

5. Presentations

6. Old Business

7. New Business

A. Budget: FY 2026-2027

Draft Operating and Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

Kennesaw City Manager Jeff Drobney presented the Fiscal Year 2027 recommended budget to the Council for their consideration. The Fiscal Year 2027 proposed budget is \$35,008, 528, which is an approximate 1.82 percent increase from the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. Dr. Drobney provided some budget highlights, including the recommended millage rate remaining at 7.75 mills, a three percent recommended Cost of Living Adjustment for all staff, and \$357,752 to fund the City's reserve account. For Fiscal year 2026, projected benefits and health care costs decreased by approximately 1 percent and retirement contributions increased by approximately 5 percent, with both costs being spread throughout each department. Dr. Drobney reviewed all proposed budget assumptions, including all revenue and expenditure highlights. The 100 percent

senior tax exemption will continue to have a negative impact on the City's General Fund and is projected to total \$1,847,630. This is almost a 2 percent increase over FY26 (\$1,811,906) and a 7.9 percent increase over FY25 (\$1,711,454). Expenditure highlights include requests for 6 new full-time and 2 part-time positions received across departments and 9 requests for personnel reclassifications. Additional expenditure highlights include how the Court Project fund, Court Services Improvement fund, Stormwater fund, Reserve fund, and Impact Fees will be used to cover various projects and needs [See Exhibit A].

Department Heads presented their operating budgets, highlights, any capital outlay items, and position summaries for their departments, respectively.

8. Committee and Board Reports

9. Public Hearing(s)

10. Consent Agenda

11. General and Administrative

12. Public Safety

13. Information Technology

14. Public Works and Building Maintenance

15. Recreation and Culture

16. Community Development

17. Public Comments

18. City Manager's Report

A. Reports, Discussions, and Updates

19. Mayor's Report

A. Mayor and Council (re)appointments to Boards and Commissions. This item is for (re)appointments made by the Mayor to any Board, Committee, Authority, or Commission requiring an appointment to fill any vacancies, resignations, and to create or dissolve boards and commissions, as deemed necessary.

20. Council Reports & Discussions

21. Executive Session

Pursuant to the provisions of O.C.G.A 50-14-3, the City Council could, at any time during the meeting, vote to close the public meeting and move to executive session to discuss matters relating to litigation, legal actions and/or communications from

the City Attorney; and/or personnel matters; and/or real estate matters.

22. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'NS', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Nicholas Simpson, Deputy City Clerk



FY 2027 Recommended Budget

Jeff Drobney
City Manager

Overview



After nearly three months of planning, budget reviews, and meetings, we're here tonight to present the recommended FY27 budget. This has been a team effort, and I want to acknowledge the exceptional work of our Finance team—Jennifer, Tony, and Allen—who have each gone above and beyond. Special thanks to Anna for her meticulous attention to detail and her unwavering support wherever it was needed. Their professionalism and teamwork have been outstanding throughout this process. This proposed budget reflects the priorities we've heard from our residents and reinforces our shared commitment to delivering high-quality services and enhancing the quality of life in our community. It also demonstrates fiscal responsibility, incorporating thoughtful planning to help safeguard against potential future challenges—whether economic, environmental, or otherwise.

FY 2027 Recommended Budget



- Staff is presenting for consideration the Fiscal Year 2027 Recommended Budget totaling \$35,008,528. This refers to the period of time between October 1, 2026 and September 30, 2027.
- Property taxes remain the City's largest source of revenue. A projected 2% increase in property tax revenue is driven by new development and re-valuations by the Cobb County Tax Assessor. In most cases, residents with the Floating Homestead Exemption will not see an increase. In 2024, steady growth and conservative budgeting allowed Kennesaw to reduce the millage rate of 8 mills to 7.75 mills.

Budget Highlights



- Recommend millage rate remains steady at 7.75 mills
- Real, Bond and Personal Tax Revenue budgeted at 2% increase over current year actual
- \$357,752 to fund City's reserve account
- There is a 3% COLA proposed in the FY 27 budget
- Salary budgets in all departments include budgeting the cost of employees selling sick & vacation time as allowed by City policy, based on historic trends
- FY 27 projected benefit and health care costs decreased by approximately 1% and retirement contributions increased by approximately 5%— both are spread throughout each department.
- Increase of overall budget between FY 26 and FY 27 is approximately 1.82%
- The City plans to use \$1 million from its general fund to complete public facing improvements, including street resurfacing and upgrades to parks and recreation facilities. These projects directly benefit residents, improve safety and accessibility, and address maintenance needs before they become more costly.

Revenue Highlights



- We see Building Services revenues in FY26 remain largely stagnant and project this trend will continue into FY27. This trend is largely driven by rising construction costs, influenced by inflation and increased tariffs on building materials, and higher interest rates. These financial pressures have caused developers to delay or to scale back projects, resulting in fewer permit applications and reduced revenue for the City.
- Parks & Recreation Fees: Staff recommends adjusting Parks and Recreation fees to keep pace with rising operational and maintenance costs and to ensure that facilities, programs, and amenities remain safe, high-quality, and accessible. These modest increases help the City recover a fair portion of service costs while keeping fees competitive with neighboring communities. Examples of increases include raising the annual Recreation Center Membership fee by \$5.00 across the board and a \$5.00 per hour increase to reserve the Craft Lab, Painting Lab, Fitness Rooms, and Dance Rooms. The additional revenue will directly support facility upkeep, program improvements, and expanded community offerings, allowing the City to maintain strong service levels without placing the full burden on general taxpayers.
- The FY27 revenue for Insurance Premium Tax is projected to increase by \$400,000 over the FY26 projection of \$3,000,000.
- We project a combined increase of \$135,000 in Franchise Fee payments for electricity and gas.

Revenue Highlights Cont.



- **Stormwater Fees:** Staff recommends adjusting stormwater fees to ensure the fund remains financially sustainable and capable of meeting growing maintenance and regulatory needs. The residential flat rate would increase from \$5.00 to \$5.50, and the non-residential rate would rise from \$1.13 to \$1.65 per 1,000 sq. ft. of impervious surface. These updates ensure that stormwater infrastructure remains reliable and well maintained. The increase is expected to generate approximately \$33,000 in additional monthly revenue, which will directly support system upkeep, regulatory compliance, and critical improvements.
- **Streetlight Fees:** Staff recommends adjusting the streetlight fee, increasing the monthly rate from \$2.15 to \$2.20. This change will help cover rising energy and maintenance costs needed to keep neighborhood streetlights operating safely and reliably.
- The City anticipates a projected payment of \$1,196,585 in FY27 from Cobb County, a 7% increase over the \$1,116,813 received in FY26. This payment is part of the long-term funding structure established under the 10-year intergovernmental agreement associated with HB 489. This increase reflects Cobb County's scheduled adjustments to service-delivery funding and is incorporated into the City's financial plan to support ongoing municipal operations and service commitments.

Revenue Highlights – Senior Tax Exemption



Senior Tax Exemption: The 100% Senior property tax exemption continues to have a significant negative impact on the General Fund. Any resident over 65 years of age is exempt from City of Kennesaw ad valorem property tax for the property on which they reside.

This exemption has been in place since 1959 and for FY27, the total dollar amounts not being collected into the General Fund is projected to total \$1,847,630. This is almost a 2% increase over FY26 (\$1,811,906) and a 7.9% increase from FY25(\$1,711,454).

Since 2012 when the amount of the senior exemption totaled \$320,576 there has been a 476% increase. With the youngest baby boomers (age 61) being born in 1965 and with 10,000 people a day turning 65 years of age, the impact of the 100% senior exemption will continue to grow and have a larger impact on the General Fund.

The senior exemption surpassed \$1 million dollars in FY 2022. If present trends continue the total amount of the senior exemption will surpass \$2 million dollars in FY28.



FY 27 Expenditure Highlights

Personnel



Requests for six (6) new full-time positions and two (2) part-time positions were received across departments, and there were nine (9) requests for reclassifications.

No new positions are currently recommended for approval. However, it is recommended to reclassify positions in both the IT/GIS Department and the Police Department. Combined, the FY27 budget impact for all recommended reclassifications comes to an increase of \$27,500.

Reclassifications	
Department	Adjustment
IT/GIS	GIS Specialist to Analyst.
IT	IT Network Manager to IT Operations Manager.
IT	IT Operations Specialist to IT Infrastructure Administrator.
Police	Two (2) Captains to Major. Both Captain positions will be frozen following the reclassification.
Police	One (1) PO2 position to Sergeant.
Police	CID Administrative Assistant to Civilian Evidence Tech. The CID Admin position will be dissolved.

Court Project Fund



Court Project Fund		
<u>Department</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Police	B&T APC 9SC Sub-Gun Kits (8)	\$42,000
Police	B&T Less Lethal Launcher Kits (4)	\$12,000
Police	45 License Scanners for DigiTicket	\$23,000
Court	Court Notice Reminders- CompleteSMS	\$3,000
Court	2 Televisions for Municipal Court Staff	\$2,000
Total Use of CPF		\$82,000

Court Services Improvement Fund



Court Services Improvement Fund		
<u>Department</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Police	Rifle Rated Shields (3)	\$30,000
Police	Ballistic Helmet Kits (8)	\$20,000
Police	Police Shotguns – Beretta A300 (10)	\$20,000
Police	Handguns (10)	\$11,400
Police	DigiTicket	\$80,000
Facilities & Building Maintenance	Cameras at City Hall	\$45,000
Facilities & Building Maintenance	Generator Expansion/Additions at City Hall	\$20,000
Total Use of CSIF		\$226,400

Stormwater Fund



Stormwater Fund	
<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Kubota Skid Steer	\$85,000

Capital Requests – General Fund

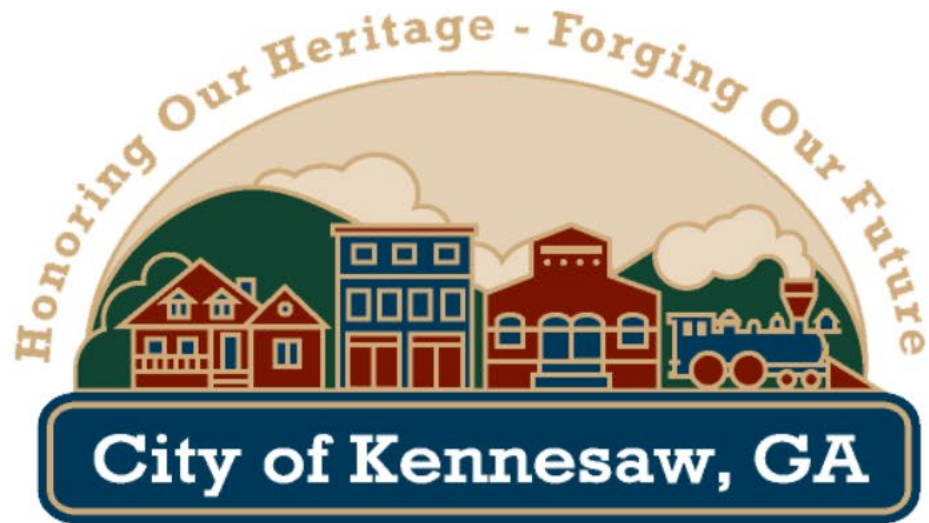


Capital Requests Funded from General Fund		
<u>Department</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Police	Marked Vehicle	\$91,000
Police	Marked Vehicle	\$91,000
Police	Marked Vehicle	\$91,000
Police	Marked Vehicle	\$91,000
Police	Marked Vehicle	\$91,000
Police	Unmarked Vehicle	\$61,000
Police	Unmarked Vehicle	\$61,000
Police	Unmarked Vehicle	\$61,000
Police	Magnet GrayKey Lite (digital forensics)	\$6,300
Public Works – Highways & Streets	Zero Turn Mower	\$14,000
Public Works – Highways & Streets	Zero Turn Mower	\$15,000
Public Works – Highways & Streets	Hot Asphalt Trailer	\$40,000
Public Works – Highways & Streets	Street Resurfacing	\$500,000
Parks & Recreation	Walk Behind Mower	\$8,478
Parks & Recreation	4 x 4 Gator	\$15,328
Parks & Recreation	Swift Cantrell Park Water Fountains Replacement	\$50,000
Parks & Recreation	Sound System for Recreation Center Gym	\$15,000
Museum/ Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Cameras at Museum	\$70,000
Information Technology	Local Data Storage	\$70,000
Total		\$1,442,106

Non-Capital Requests



Non-Capital Requests Funded from General Fund		
<u>Department</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Cemetery	Section III Tree Removal	\$12,500
Museum	New Exterior Sign for Front of Museum	\$9,500
Public Works – Highways & Streets	Road Salt	\$20,000
Public Works – Highways & Streets	Rubber Pellets for Amphitheater	\$30,000
Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Downtown Plaza & Pedestrian Tunnel Reader Boards & Signage	\$11,000
Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Replacement gate for Smith Gilbert Gardens	\$18,000
Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	IT Renovations (Replace Carpet, Paint, and lights in IT offices)	\$20,000
Parks & Recreation/ Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Banquet Hall Flooring Replacement	\$40,000
Parks & Recreation/ Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Baseball and Softball Building Renovations	\$100,000
Parks & Recreation/ Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Skate Park Restroom Renovations	\$25,000
Parks & Recreation/ Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	Swift Cantrell/Adams Park Sidewalk Correction/Remediation	\$45,000
Parks & Recreation/ Buildings & Facilities Maintenance	AV Replacement/Repair BRCC Banquet Hall/Large Meeting Room	\$35,000
Parks & Recreation	Swift Cantrell Skate Park Rehabilitation	\$50,000
Parks & Recreation	Scanning Equipment for Recreation Center and BRCC	\$5,850
Total Non-Capital Requests Funded from General Fund		\$421,850



How Are we Funding Community Priorities?

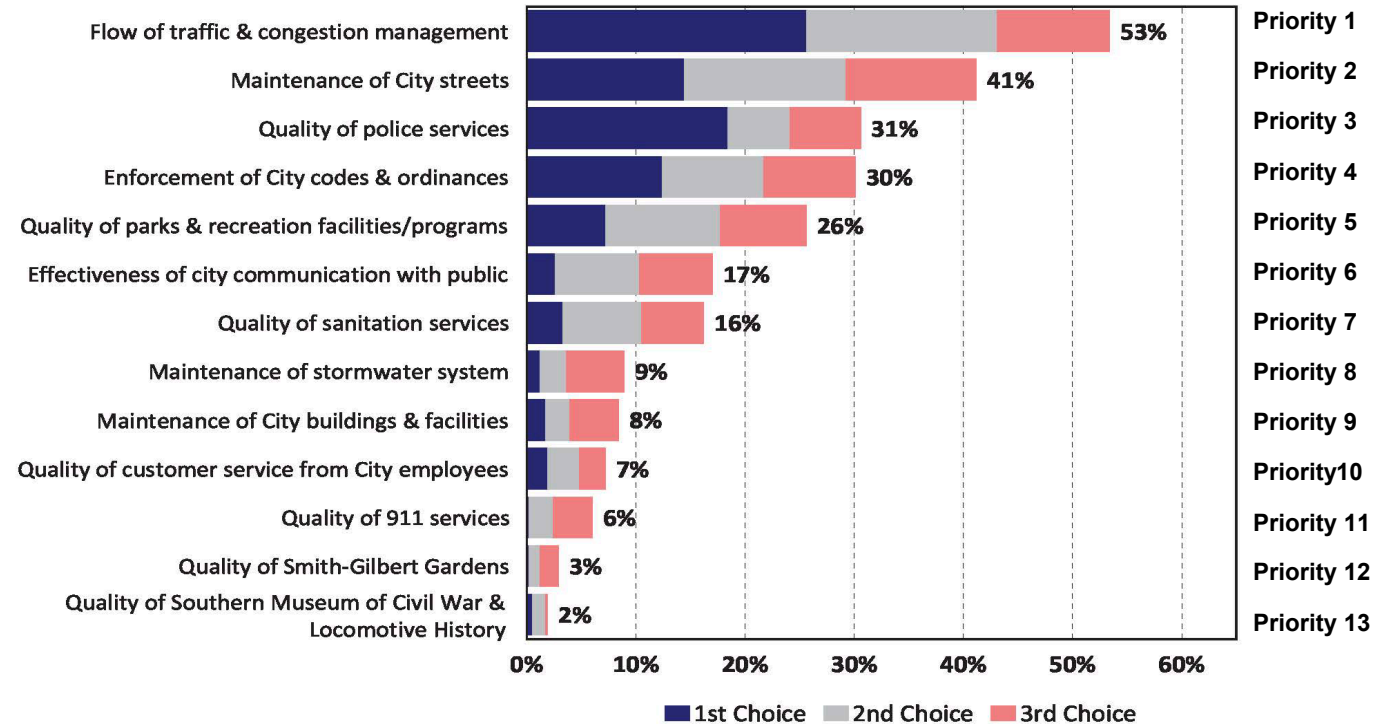
Community Priorities



2022 City of Kennesaw Community Survey: Findings Report

Q2. City Services That Should Receive the Most Emphasis Over the Next 3-5 Years by Major Category

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices





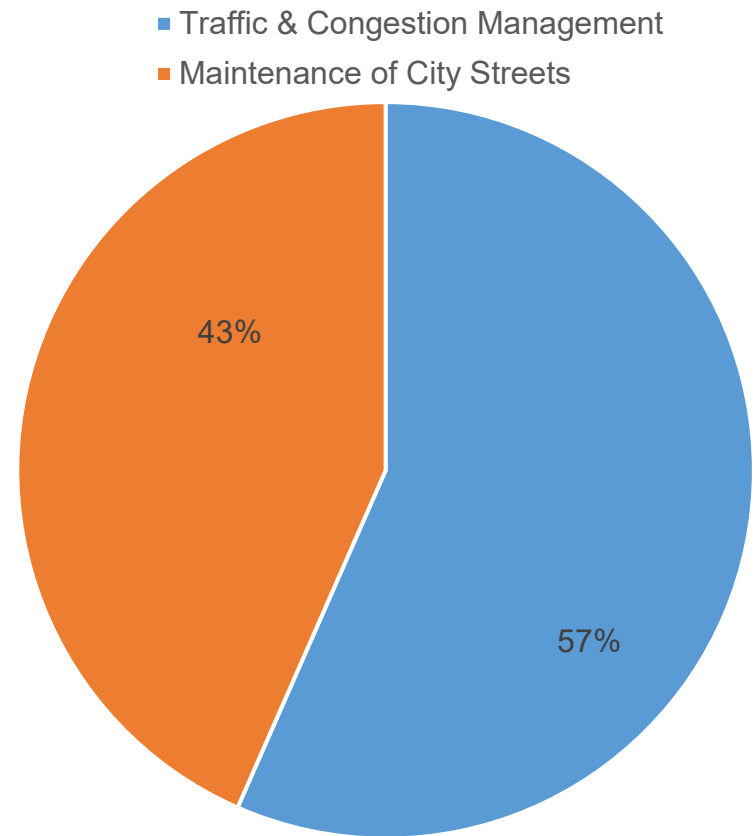
Priorities 1 & 2: \$15 Million Spent 2023-2026

Traffic & Congestion Management

- Ben King Road: \$1,232,929 (2016 SPLOST)
- Cherokee Street: \$3,568,073 (2011 SPLOST)
- Sardis Street Overpass: \$1,083,304 (2016 SPLOST)
- Sardis Street Extension: \$2,499,964 (2016 SPLOST)
- Sardis Street: \$62,888 (2022 SPLOST)
- Cathey/Rutledge Improvements: \$86,713 (2022 SPLOST)

Maintenance of City Streets

- Mack Dobbs Road (completed in 2024): \$2,064,697 (2016 SPLOST)
- Neighborhood Street Improvements: \$785,000 (2022 SPLOST)
- LRA 2023-2026: \$1,260,235
- LMIG 2023 - 2026: \$1,781,355
- CDBG 2023-2026: \$656,400



Priorities 1 & 2: \$2.6 Million (2026-2027)



GDOT LRA and SLGRG: \$850,000

- Street & Right-of-Way Paving, Cobb International Blvd

General Fund: \$500,000

- Street Paving Projects – Streets TBD

CDBG: \$300,000 *(approximate)*

- Woodland Acres Subdivision – Phase X

LMIG: \$950,000 *(approximate)*

- Cherokee St, Ben King

Priorities 1 & 2: \$5 Million (2026 & Beyond)



Federal Grants

- \$3,000,000 for neighborhood street resurfacing, sidewalk installation, and drainage improvements in Kencrest-Knightsbridge, Kennesaw Springs, and Blackjack Estates
 - Improvements anticipate in Fall 2026/Spring 2027.
- \$2,000,000 to start repaving Cobb International Boulevard
 - Design is underway with an anticipated let date in June 2027.

Priorities 3, 4, & 5: \$29.4 Million (FY 25 and FY 26 General Fund)



Nearly half (44%) of the \$66 million in the FY 25 and FY 26 combined budgets supported Priorities 3, 4, and 5.

Quality of Police Services

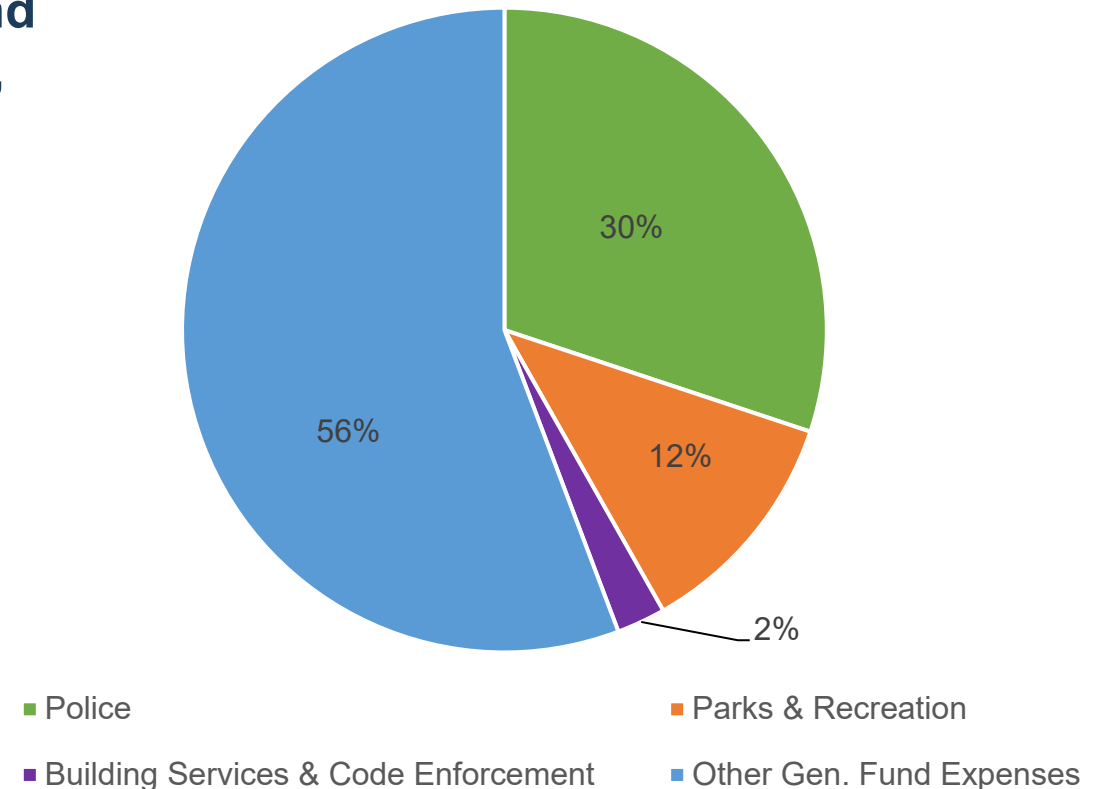
Total PD Budget: \$20,012,886

Enforcement of City Codes & Ordinances

Total Building Services Budget: \$1,627,111

Quality of Parks & Recreation Facilities/Programs

Total Parks & Rec Budget: \$7,777,564



Priorities 3, 4, & 5: \$16.5 Million (FY 27 General Fund)



47% of FY 27 Budget is funding Priorities 3, 4, & 5

Quality of Police Services

Total PD Budget: \$11,085,221

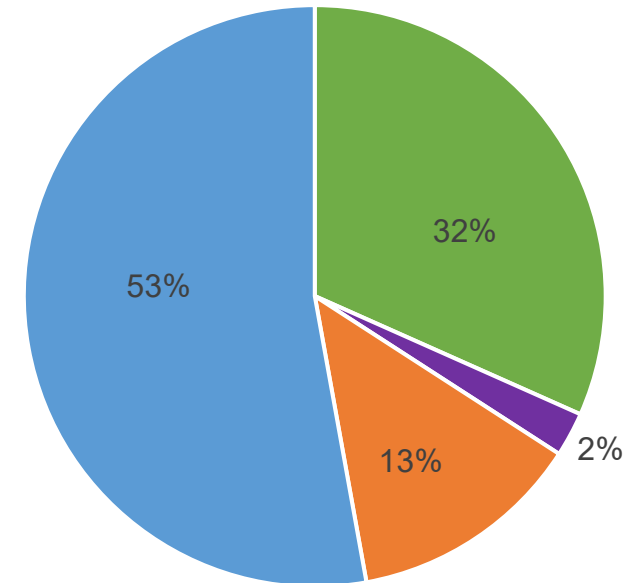
Enforcement of City Codes & Ordinances

Total Building Services Budget: \$863,656

Quality of Parks & Recreation Facilities/Programs

Total Parks & Rec Budget: \$4,559,145

FY 27 Funding

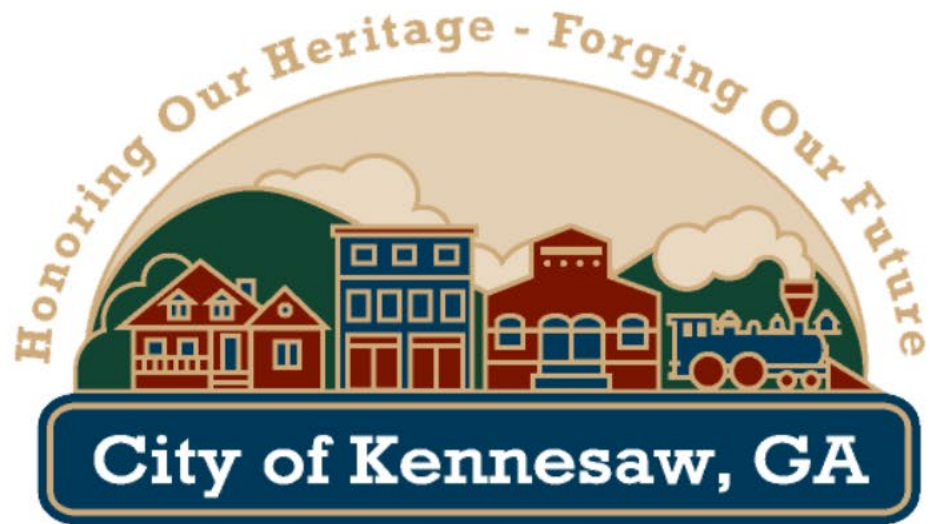


■ Police

■ Parks & Recreation

■ Building Services & Code Enforcement

■ Other Gen. Fund Expenses



Thank You!

Names and Addresses will be disclosed in the Permanent Minutes of the
City of Kennesaw

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS LEGIBLE AND CLEAR

City Council Special Budget Work Session

6/29/2026

Public Comment Sign-in

	Name	Address	Topic
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