



Dear Neighbors,

Over the last month, Councilmembers have scrutinized the City budget for the fiscal year that starts on July 1st. Their meeting discussions probed many issues. We summarize the main issues in four posts - two on the operating budget and two on the capital expense budget, also called the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). For the CIP posts, we focus on the two items that will require significant public debt issuance in the near future - the sewer project (~\$28m) and the new property yard (\$30m).

Andrew Oleson analyzed years of police crash reports to get a better understanding of where and why traffic crashes happen in the City. He presented his analysis to the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT) and shares his work with us in a post.

Finally, the site plan for the OakPark Townhomes was approved by the Planning Commission on May 1st.

Thank you for your interest in the City.

The Editors  
May 2024

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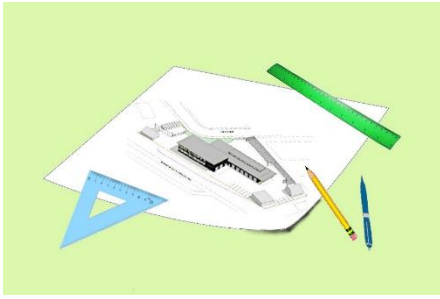
## [FY 2025 Budget: A Bigger Government For A Growing City](#)

Department heads justified their requests for the equivalent of 16 more full-time employees. Staffing has increased by 20% since 2021, as City Hall tries to keep up with the large number of projects and the growing population. We focus on the three departments with the largest budgets – the City manager’s office with two new deputy City managers, Public Safety with six additions, and Public Works with five.



## [FY2025 Budget Adopted After Squeezing Another Penny Off The Tax Rate](#)

The City Council asked the City Manager to provide an alternative budget with another penny reduction in the real estate tax rate. On May 13th, this budget won approval (6-1). This post reports on the negotiations to achieve the penny cut, discussion of the delay to Police accreditation and concerns about the budgeting process in the revenue sharing agreement with the School Board.



## [Property Yard Design Concepts Report Released](#)

The feasibility study for a new property yard on Gordon Road has been released, including the placement of facilities on the lots and a concept design. The main yard would focus on parking, permitting a future public-private partnership for a portion of the yard, such as a public garage, linked to re-development. A new facilities building would be built across the road. \$30 million has been budgeted for this project in the 6-year CIP plan.



## [The Little City's Big Sewage Challenge – Part 3: Will Debt \(i.e. Taxpayers\) Pay For Growth?](#)

The new budget does not resolve the issue of how much debt will be used to fund upgrades and capacity increases to the sewer infrastructure, although the City Manager acknowledged the gap between developer fees and actual growth. The CIP shows debt will be issued in tranches starting in FY 2026 for a total of \$28 million by 2030 out of the total \$37 million projected cost.



## [CACT Analysis of Traffic Crashes In Falls Church City](#)

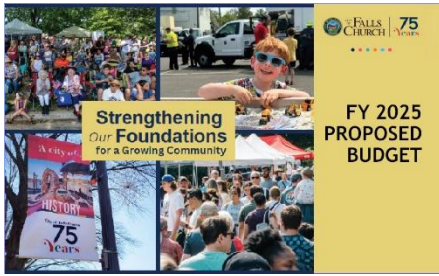
Injuries from traffic crashes jumped by 50% in 2023 compared to 2022. 203 injuries were reported in the last 10 months. This analysis looks at the data behind these numbers and some possible remedies to make our roads safer.



## [OakPark Townhomes The First T-Zone Project on Park Avenue](#)

**Update:** The Planning Commission has approved the site plan for this by-right development. The OakPark Townhomes, located on Park Avenue, is the first proposal to take advantage of the new T-Zone ordinance. Developer Madison Homes takes full advantage with the maximum density and size allowed. The expected price of each townhome is around \$1m vs. the \$800,000 assumed when the rezoning was adopted.

## Posts you may have missed



### [A Review of the Proposed FY 2025 Budget](#)

The \$138.3 million FY 2025 budget is a 16% increase that includes \$11.8 million of capital spending. City staff will receive a 6% pay raise while real estate taxes average increase is 2.4%. This post explains the budget and provides additional historical data for context.



### [The Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) 2025 and Beyond](#)

The capital plan (CIP) projects for 2025 total \$18.3m. Over the next 6 years, the City plan has \$191m of projects that will require about \$60m of debt to be issued. We look at the projects being funded and Councilmembers' concerns expressed at their work session on April 8, 2024.



### [W&OD Trail Crossings – Construction Begins April 2024](#)

Construction of four W&OD trail crossings will last until August. Expect periodic road closures on Great Falls St, N Oak St and N Spring St. The new crossings maintain separate bicycle and pedestrian paths, also islands, different pavement markings and lighting. See 3D renditions of the new crossings.