

Additional 2025-26 Budget Reductions Discussed

As part of the strategic budget reduction process, other possibilities were discussed along the way, including:

- Further Library Reductions – staffing, hours (\$175,000)
- Closure of the Community Center facility (\$200,00)
- General Services COLA reduction (\$265,000)
- Deeper Personnel Reductions across multiple departments anywhere from 7-8 positions, totaling up to (\$840,000).
- Combining Parks and Recreation Director into an existing department (\$100,000)

After deeper consideration and analysis, these items were categorized as 'next-level' choices and not included in the initial 3M reduction target. To detail a few of those conversations:

Service Level Reductions – In the course of budget reduction conversations, many City departments offered up a number of creative and resourceful savings solutions, and discussions centered on considering service level reductions and the impact on the community. Additional cuts to the Library beyond those already planned next year would have even more dramatic impacts on Library services, and the 3 million dollar goal was reached without having to go any deeper. Similarly, reductions and targeted closures of Parks and Recreation facilities and programs were considered, and deemed to be a low amount of savings for highly disruptive service cuts that would result in community uncertainty about program offerings, stability, and service hours.

Similarly for the Parks and Recreation Director - conversations which were explored based on the current vacancy and the savings down this path were not estimated to be high enough to defray the ancillary costs of combining management into a separate department. While there may be opportunities to pursue other operational efficiencies between departments, a full director position reduction/combination was not recommended.

Deeper Personnel Reductions across multiple departments – City efforts concentrated first on positional vacancies and reductions to hours, services and programs that did not translate directly to full positional layoffs. To reach the 3 million dollar goal, staff layoffs were minimized and while several employees were laid off or had had schedules reduced, personnel reductions focused on leaving open positions unfunded, creating enough savings to reach the goal.

General Services COLA reduction – One of the main goals of budget reduction analysis work is to focus on long term, steady reductions to stabilize operating costs and provide savings from year to year. COLA reductions would be a short-term, non-repeatable type of reduction with a high downside and a low return. A short-term COLA reduction would come with a range of consequences from being out of sync with market conditions, highly impacting our ability to attract and recruit a skilled workforce, with additional adverse affects to employee longevity and employee retention.

In summary, these options were pushed down the list in favor of lower service impact and high return reductions. Future adjustments may still be made to increase revenue calculations involving marijuana taxes, fines and bail forfeitures, and other less predictable smaller revenues. These discussions will continue through the budget process and in future years as the City continues to pursue efficiencies, reductions and a balanced budget offering as many services as possible.