



TOWN OF LA PLATA
Town Council Minutes
April 28, 2026, 6:00 PM
Regular Meeting
Council Chambers, La Plata Town Hall
305 Queen Anne St.
La Plata MD

PRESENT: Mayor Jeannine James
Councilman Paul Guttenberg
Councilman Patrick McCormick
Councilman Gregory Sampson, Jr.
Councilman Tyjon Johnson

ABSENT:

TOWN STAFF: Chuck Stevens, Town Manager
Michelle Miner, Assistant Town Manager
Don Dooley, Director of Planning
Monica Kennedy, Director of Human Resources (virtual)
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer
Matt Norris, Chief of Police
Kelly Phipps, Director of Legislative Services
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

GUESTS: Matthew Stark, Representative, Baker Tilley (virtual)
Kitty Powell, Representative, Washington Square Development

1. Call to Order

1.1. Meeting Attendance and Decorum

Attendees, please use meeting courtesy. Virtual attendees are asked to mute microphones when joining the meeting. Participants may be muted by the Town Clerk and meetings will be recorded.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the public has the right to view/listen to the discussion only. At their discretion, the Town Council may allow participants to voice questions or provide comments on the topics under discussion. Written comments may be submitted via email to Legislative@townoflaplata.org. Individuals wishing to address the Town Council may sign up in advance on the Town's website ([Public Communications](#)) or on the meeting sign-up sheet.

Join on your computer, mobile app, or room device.

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 271 095 028 035 62
Passcode: vp3Sh6j2
(Calendar Year 2026)

In accordance with the Code of Maryland, General Provisions, Section 3-302 (Open Meetings Act), notice is hereby given that a portion of this meeting will be held in closed session.

Mayor James called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1.2. Roll Call

The Town Clerk conducted Roll Call.

1.3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor James led all assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4. Approval of the Meeting Agenda

Councilman Guttenberg moved to approve the agenda with amendments to conduct item 3.2 prior to 3.1.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

2. Disclosure of Closed Session

2.1. Disclosure of Closed Session on April 14, 2026

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Mayor James disclosed the conduct of a closed session on April 14, 2026.

3. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

3.1. Financial Forecast Presentation (Baker/Tilly)

Matthew Stark, Senior Analyst, Baker Tilly, provided the Town Council with a Financial Forecast Presentation.

3.2. Neighborhood Grant Presentation

On behalf of the Town Council, Councilman Guttenberg presented a neighborhood grant to Kitty

Powell, representative for Washington Square Development.

3.3. Proclamation: Professional Municipal Clerks Week

On behalf of the Council, Mayor James presented the Municipal Clerks week Proclamation acknowledging the La Plata Town Clerk during the presentation.

3.4. Public Comment

No public speakers were present.

4. Public Hearing - Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget

4.1. Call to Order (Presiding Officer)

Mayor James called the public hearing to order at 7:11 PM.

4.2. Review of Public Notices (Town Clerk)

The Town Clerk conducted a review of public notices.

4.3. Summary of Town Staff Report and Recommendation

The Town Manager gave a brief summary of the Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/ Budget, Tax Rate and Fee Schedule. The Town Manager stated the staff recommendation to proceed with legislation and adopt the FY 2027 Financial Plan, Budget, Tax Rate and Fee Schedule.

4.4. Questions by the Town Council to Town Staff

The Town Manager answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Manager acknowledged Councilman Guttenberg's request to revise the value assigned to the Historic Firehouse within the Capital Budget. The proposed correction allocated only the funding necessary to preserve the building in the absence of a community partner that would provide additional value to the Town of La Plata.

4.5. Written Documents Entered into the Record (Town Clerk)

No written documents were entered into the record.

4.6. Speakers from the Public

No public speakers were present at this public hearing.

4.7. Additional Questions by the Town Council

There were no additional questions from the Town Council.

4.8. Closing of Public Hearing

The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation. Mayor James closed the public hearing at 7:24 PM.

5. Public Hearing - Fiscal Year 2027 Fee Schedule

5.1. Call to Order (Presiding Officer)

Mayor James called the public hearing to order at 7:25 PM.

5.2. Review of Public Notices (Town Clerk)

The Town Clerk conducted a review of public notices.

5.3. Summary of Town Staff Report and Recommendation

The Town Manager re-stated the staff recommendation to proceed with legislation and adopt the FY 2027 Financial Plan, Budget, Tax Rate, and Fee Schedule.

5.4. Questions by the Town Council to Town Staff

The Town Manager and the Town Treasurer answered questions from the Town Council.

5.5. Written Documents Entered into the Record (Town Clerk)

No written documents were entered into the record.

5.6. Speakers from the Public

No public speakers were present at this public hearing.

5.7. Additional Questions by the Town Council

There were no additional questions from the Town Council.

5.8. Closing of Public Hearing

The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation. Mayor James closed the public hearing at 7:34 PM.

6. Public Hearing - Zoning Ordinance Amendments (Adequate Public Facilities)

6.1. Call to Order (Presiding Officer)

Mayor James called the public hearing to order at 7:35 PM.

6.2. Review of Public Notices (Town Clerk)

The Town Clerk conducted a review of public notices.

6.3. Summary of Town Staff Report and Recommendation

The Town Manager and Director Dooley conducted a brief overview of Zoning Ordinance Amendments (Adequate Public Facilities).

6.4. Questions by the Town Council to Town Staff

The Town Manager and Director Dooley answered questions from the Town Council.

6.5. Written Documents Entered into the Record (Town Clerk)

No written documents were entered into the record.

6.6. Speakers from the Public

Renata Rhodes gave public comment in support of Zoning Ordinance Amendments (Adequate Public Facilities).

6.7. Additional Questions by the Town Council

The Town Manager and Director Dooley answered additional questions from the Town Council.

6.8. Closing of Public Hearing

The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation. Mayor James closed the public hearing at 8:31 PM.

7. Consent Agenda

7.1. Approval of Minutes from March meetings:

- March 10, 2026 - Regular Meeting
- March 17, 2026 - Special Meeting
- March 24, 2026 - Regular Meeting

Councilman Johnson moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

8. Matters of Council Discussion

8.1. Governance Documents

The Town Manager gave a brief overview of Governance Documents. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

8.2. Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS)

The Town Manager gave a brief overview of the transition to the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation. Mayor James voted in opposition.

8.3. Realignment of Beautification Commission and Keep La Plata Beautiful

Director Phipps provided an overview of the Realignment of the Beautification Commission and Keep La Plata Beautiful. Councilman Johnson requested the Town Council's consensus to change the legislation language to indicate that there is no requirement for the Council to have a representative on the Sustainability Advisory Committee. The Town Council reached a consensus to not change the language of the pending legislation. Councilman McCormick and Councilman Johnson voted aye to make the change. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation. Councilman Johnson voted in opposition.

8.4. Flag Protocol

The Town Manager gave a brief overview of the Town Flag Protocol. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation including an amendment to the General Guidelines section to include the word governmental in reference to other flags.

8.5. Water Conservation Policies

The Town Manager gave a brief overview of water conservation and gauged the Council's interest in moving the item to the Planning Commission for research. The Town Council reached a consensus to refer the item to the Planning Commission for development.

9. Legislation

9.1. Ordinance 26-04 Sustainability Advisory Committee (Green Team)(First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Sustainability Advisory Committee (Green Team)

FOR the purpose of creating a Sustainability Advisory Committee (Green Team); and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.2. Ordinance 26-05 Anti-Harassment Policy for Elected Officials (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Anti-Harassment Policy for Elected Officials

FOR the purpose of adopting an Anti-Harassment Policy applicable to elected officials of the Town of La Plata; establishing a framework for responding to complaints of harassment made against elected officials; providing standards of conduct; and generally relating to the protection of Town officials, employees, and others from harassing conduct in connection with Town business.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.3. Ordinance 26-06 Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/ Budget

FOR the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.4. Ordinance 26-07 Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Fee Schedule (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Fee Schedule

FOR the purpose of adopting the Fee Schedule, dealing with fees set by the Town of La Plata; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.5. Ordinance 26-08 Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate

FOR the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.6. Ordinance 26-09 Chapter 191 – Zoning Ordinance for the Town of La Plata, Maryland (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Chapter 191 – Zoning Ordinance for the Town of La Plata, Maryland

FOR the purpose of amending the Zoning Ordinance to comprehensively update the Town Zoning Ordinance, requiring the demonstration of adequate public infrastructure capacity prior to development approval; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.7. Ordinance 26-10 Chapter 173 - Subdivision and Land Development (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Chapter 173 – Subdivision and Land Development

FOR the purpose of amending Chapter 173, Subdivision and Land Development, redefining the process by which annual school seat allocations are calculated and establishing a formal Development Agreement process; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

9.8. Resolution 26-20 Town Flag Protocol (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Town Flag Protocol

FOR the purpose of adopting the Town Flag Protocol; and all matters relating thereto.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt Resolution 26-20 with amendments.

Moved By: Patrick McCormick, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

9.9. Resolution 26-21 Revision of Town Council Rules of Procedure (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Revision of Town Council Rules of Procedure

FOR the purpose of revising the rules and guidelines by which the Council of the Town of La Plata (Town Council) operates; and all matters related thereto.

Councilman Johnson moved to adopt Resolution 26-21 as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

9.10. Resolution 26-24 Keep La Plata Beautiful (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Keep La Plata Beautiful

FOR the purpose of repealing Resolution 19-18, establishing the Keep La Plata Beautiful (KLB) Committee and the composition of the membership; and all matters related thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Resolution 26-24 as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson

Nays: Councilman Johnson

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

9.11. Resolution 26-25 Code of Civility (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Code of Civility

FOR the purpose of formally adopting a Code of Civility to govern the conduct of elected

officials, appointed officials, staff, applicants, and members of the public participating in the affairs of the Town of La Plata; affirming standards of respectful engagement in the conduct of Town business; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Resolution 26-25 as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

9.12. Resolution 26-26 Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System Pick-Up (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System Pick-Up

FOR the purpose of confirming the Town of La Plata as an approved employer with respect to the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System ("LEOPS"), and that the Town of La Plata shall pick up all of the mandatory employee contributions for La Plata officers participating in the LEOPS, in accordance with Annotated Code of Maryland, State Personnel and Pensions Article; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Resolution 26-26 as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

Ayes: Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: Mayor James

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

9.13. Resolution 26-27 Transfer to the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Transfer to the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System

FOR the purpose of withdrawing eligible law enforcement officers employed by the La Plata Police Department from the Employees' Pension System and transferring such officers to the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Resolution 26-27 as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson,
Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

10. New Business

10.1. Reports from the Mayor and Town Council

The Mayor and Town Council reported on activities in their respective boards and commissions, and on current and upcoming events and activities in the town.

10.2. Future Agenda Forecast (Written Only)

11. Adjourn

11.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 9:56 PM.

Submitted by:

Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk



Town of La Plata

Review of General Fund Projections

April 28, 2026

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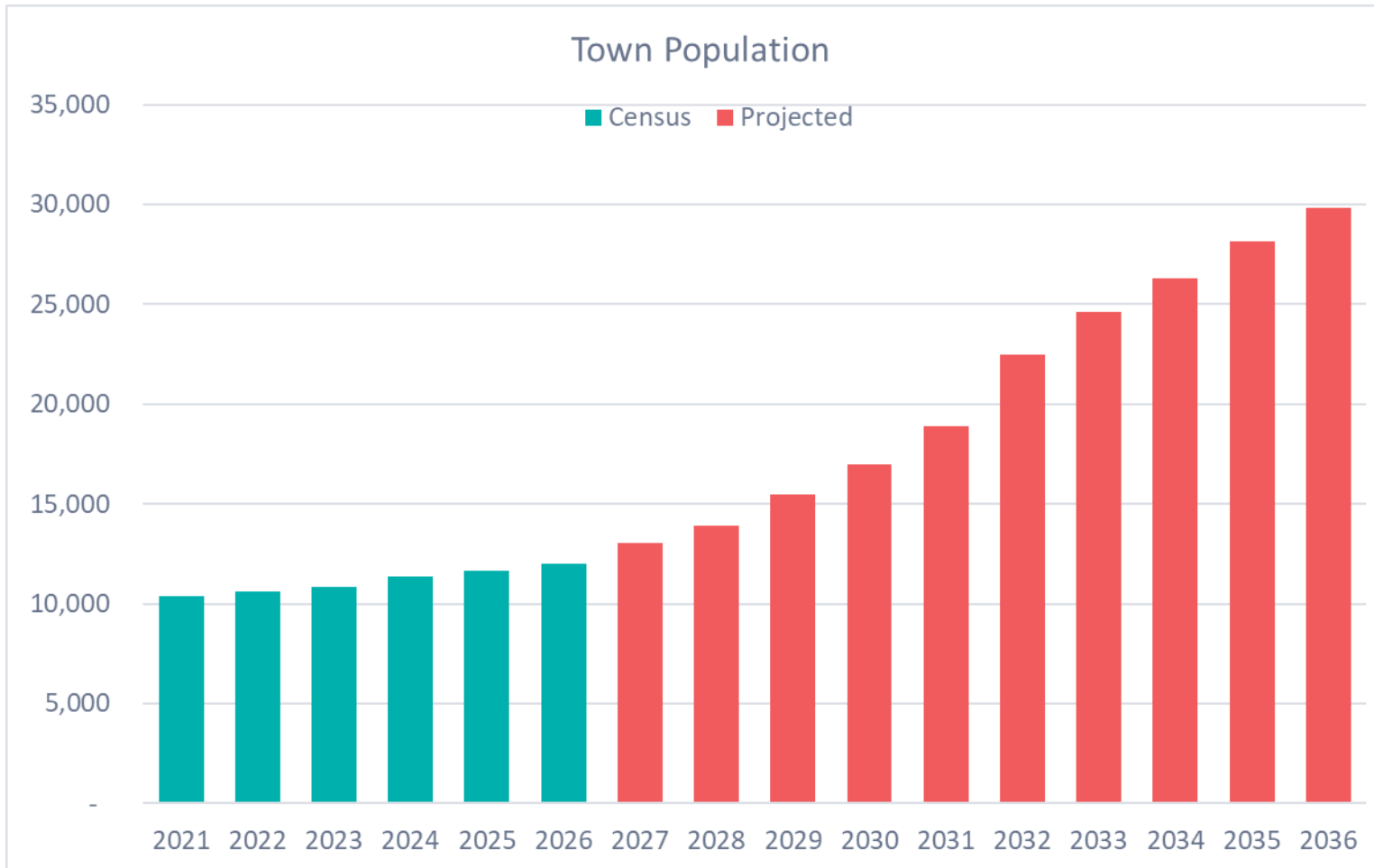
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Background

Growth and Development

- Town has been growing rapidly
 - Rapid growth expected to continue for next decade
- Growth brings opportunities and challenges

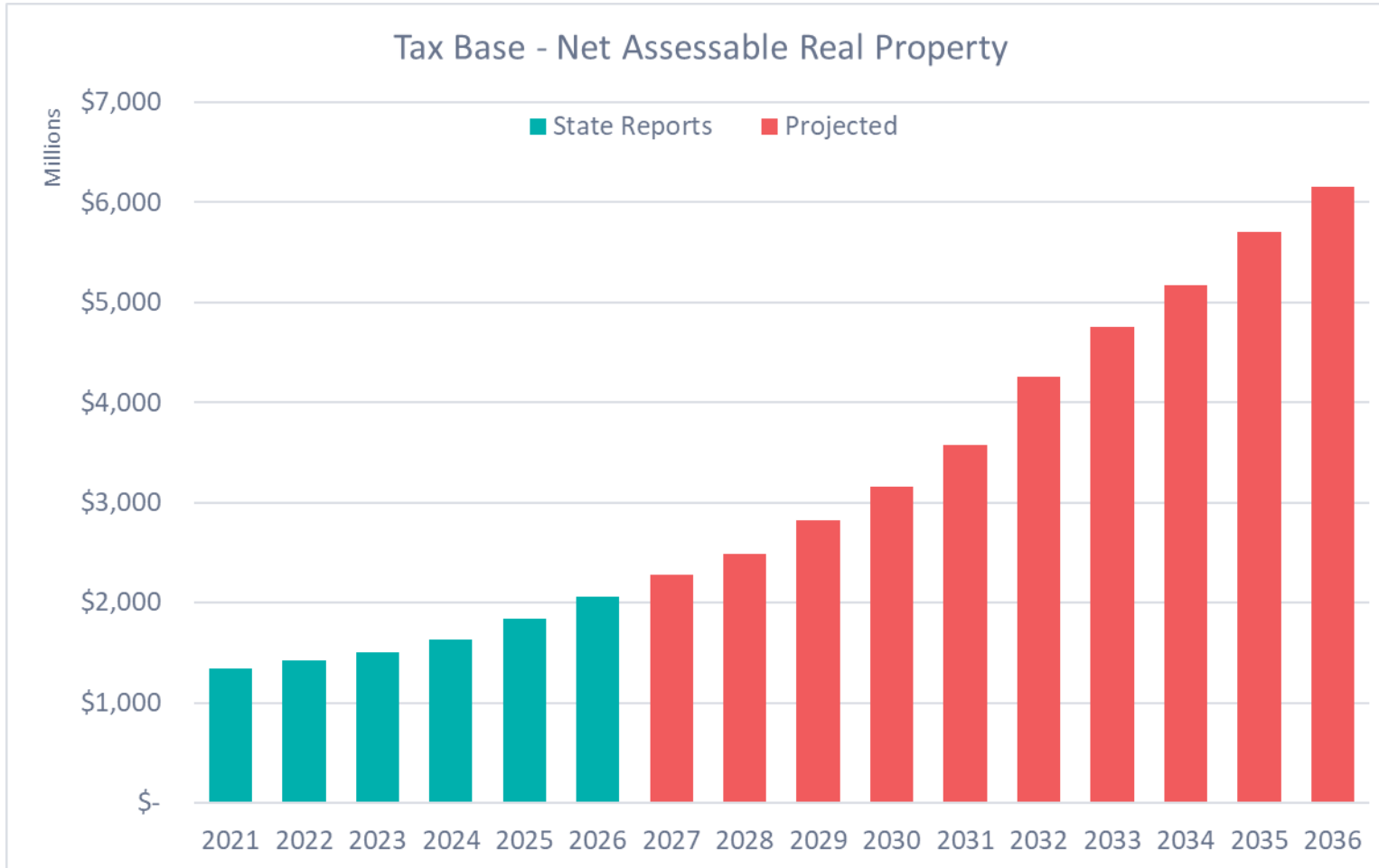
Population Growth



- Census estimates nearly 12,000 residents for 2026.
- Population expected to double by 2033.
- Population expected to grow to nearly 30,000 by 2036.



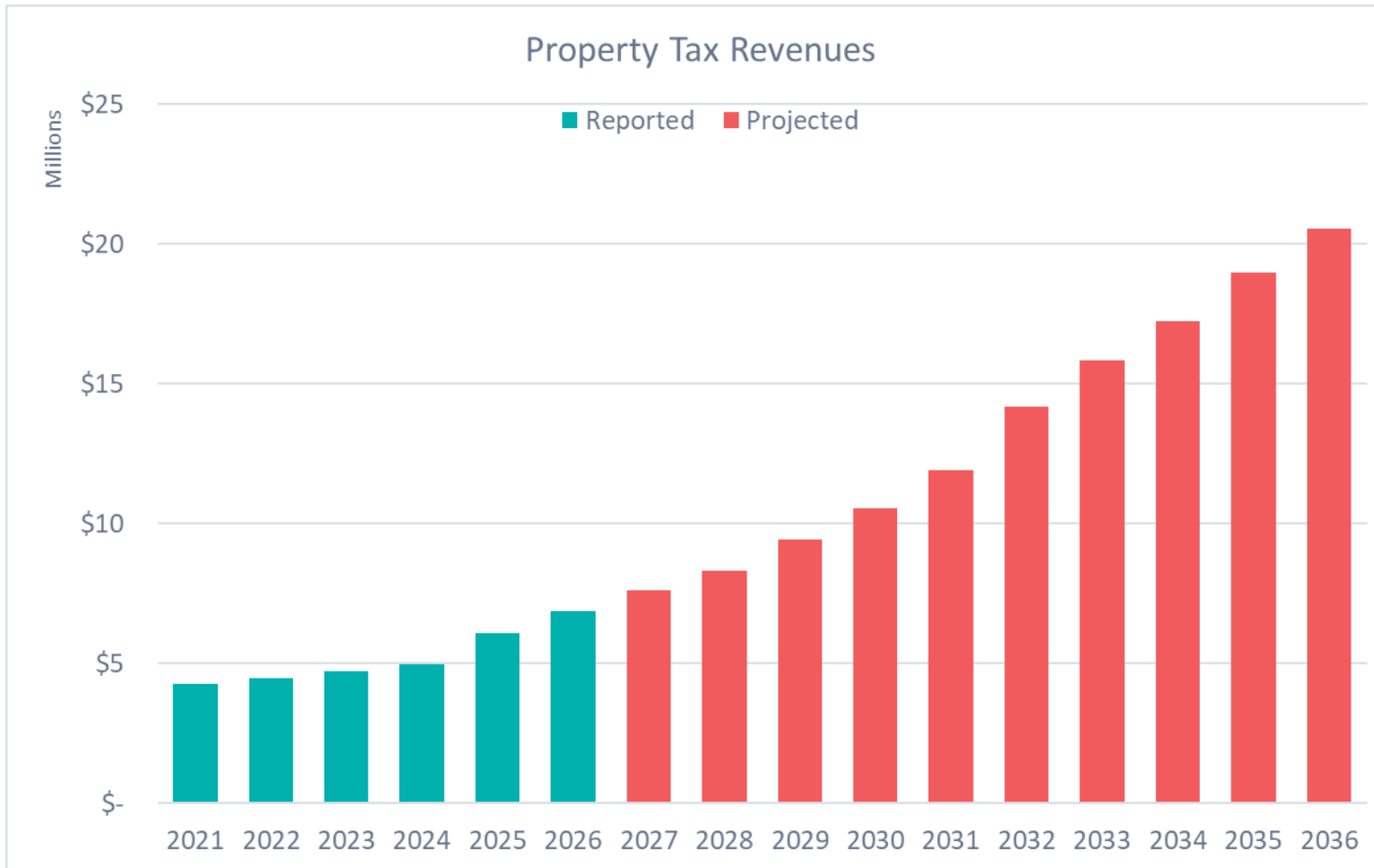
Tax Base Growth



- Tax base grew 50% between 2021 and 2026.
- Development is expected to accelerate in coming years.
- Tax base likely to double in next 5-6 years.



Property Tax Growth



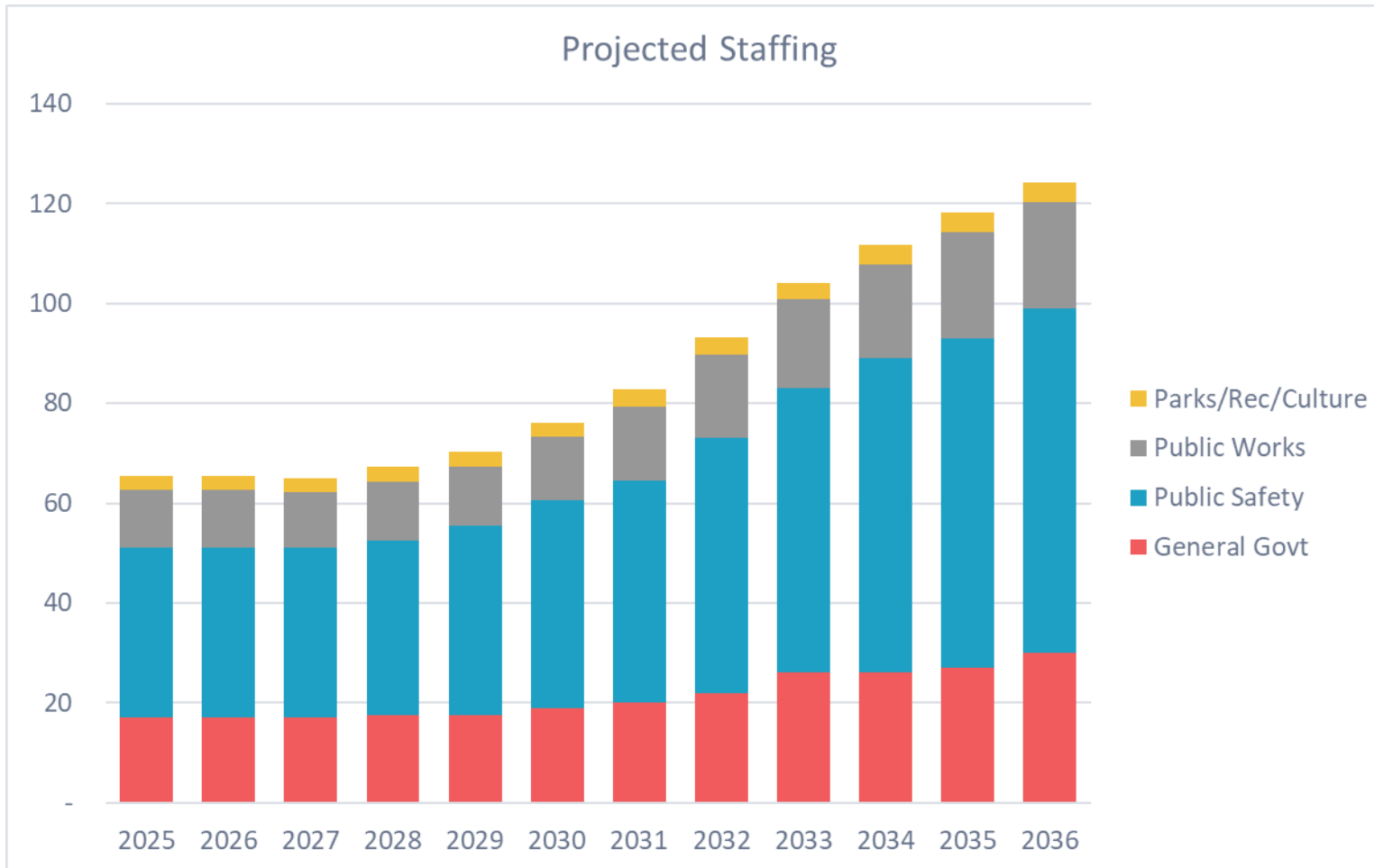
- Assuming that the Town holds its levy rate at current level, property tax revenues are expected to rise in proportion to new tax base.
- Property tax revenue expected to double in next 5-6 years.



Growth and Development *(cont.)*

- To provide service to new residents, the Town will need to add staff and facilities.
- The Town will likely benefit from some economies of scale, but the organization will still need to grow significantly.

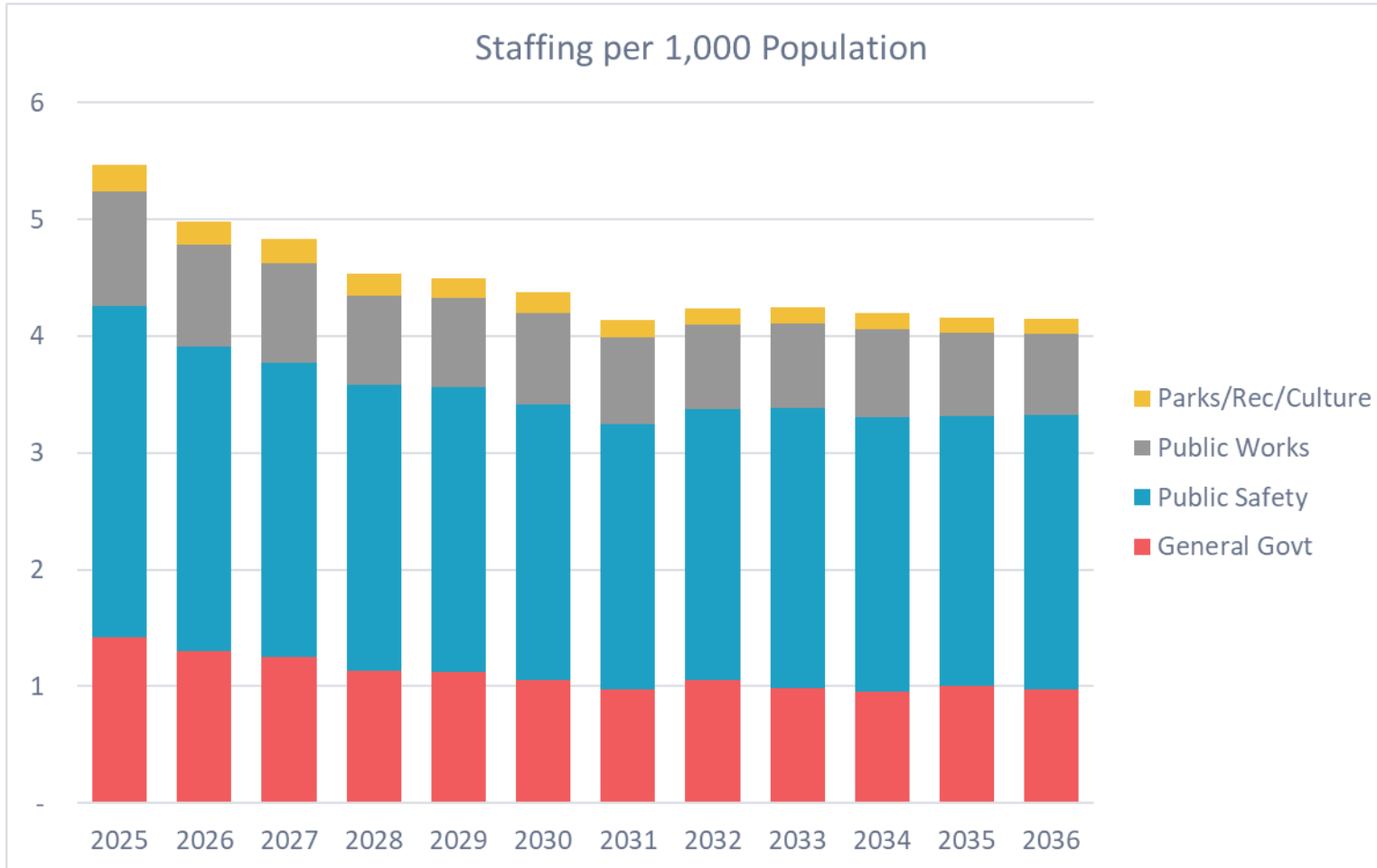
Staffing Needs



- Current staffing is approximately 67 FTEs.
- For purposes of long-term projections, we assume staffing grows to 124 FTEs by 2036.
- Largest increase is expected to come from police patrol.
 - Police staffing expected to grow from current proportion of 52% to almost 60% of total Town staffing.



Staffing Needs *(cont.)*



- In terms of staffing per 1,000 population, the current level is approximately 5.5 FTEs per 1,000.
- Staffing projections see proportion drop to around 4.2 FTEs per 1,000.
- Staffing may need to grow faster to meet service demands of new residents.



Capital Needs

- Additional staff will require facilities and equipment.
- Capital planning will need to anticipate costs of new and expanded facilities.
- If Town identifies \$50 million in capital needs, funding will be a challenge:
 - Collect \$50 million in fund balance to pay for projects, or
 - Pay debt service of approx. \$4 million per year for 20 years.



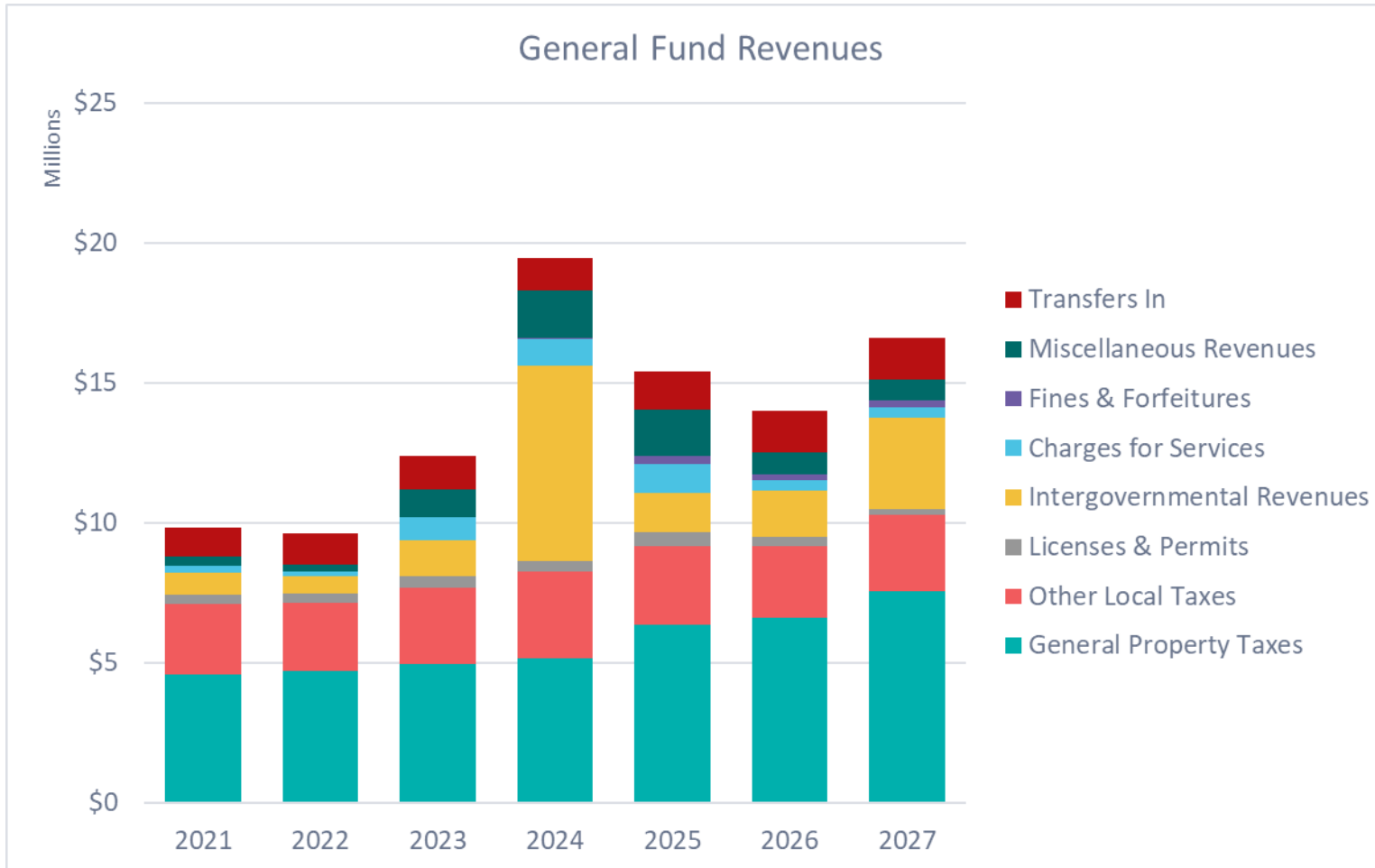
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General Fund Review

Information Used

- Actual Town revenues and expenses from FY 2021-25
- Approved budgets for FY 2026 and 2027
- Capital project lists for FY 2027-32
- Assessed value statements from State of Maryland for FY 2021-26

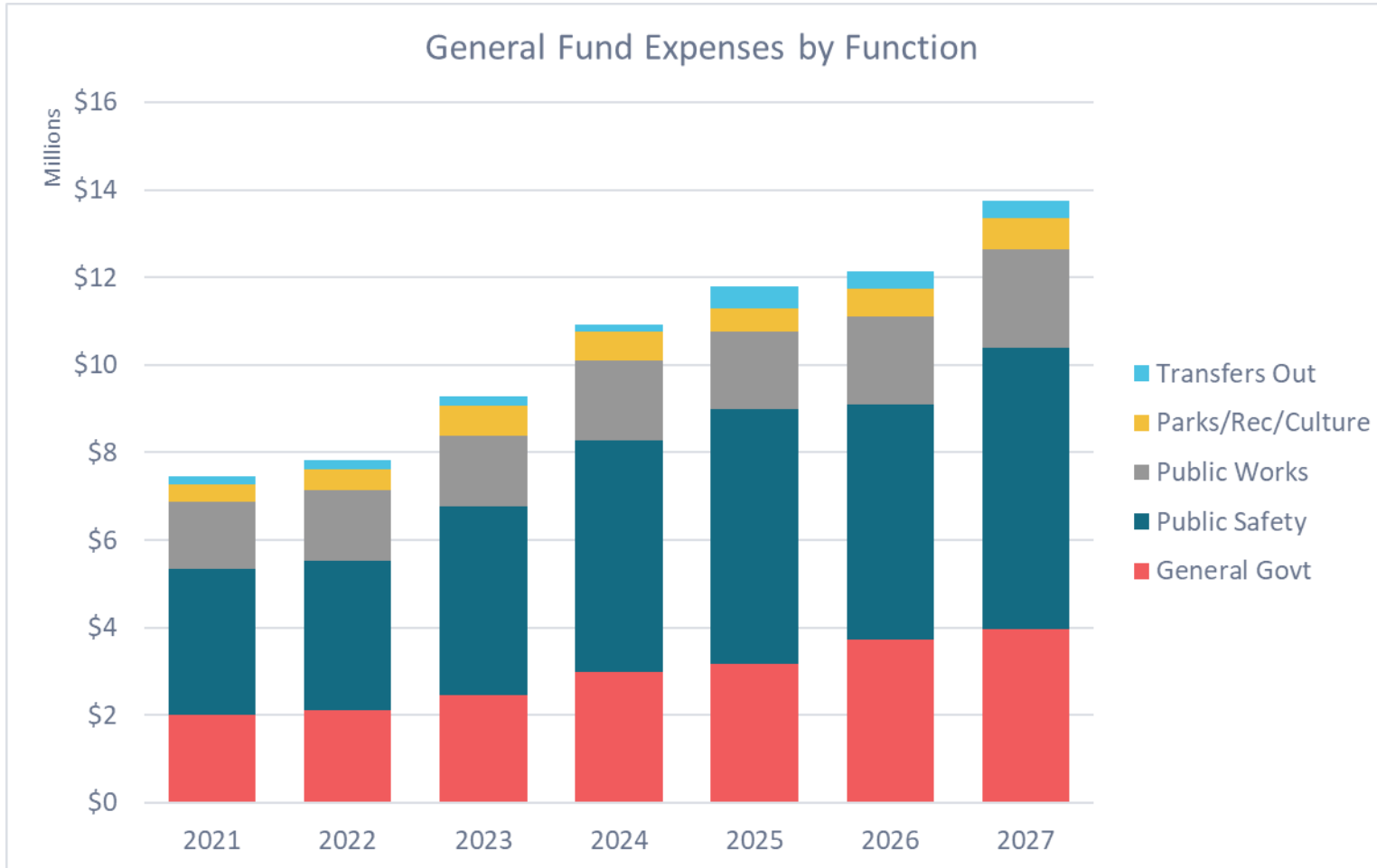
General Fund - Revenues



- ARPA funds boosted FY2024 revenues.
- FY2026 revenues are from budget; will need to revisit actual numbers at fiscal year end.



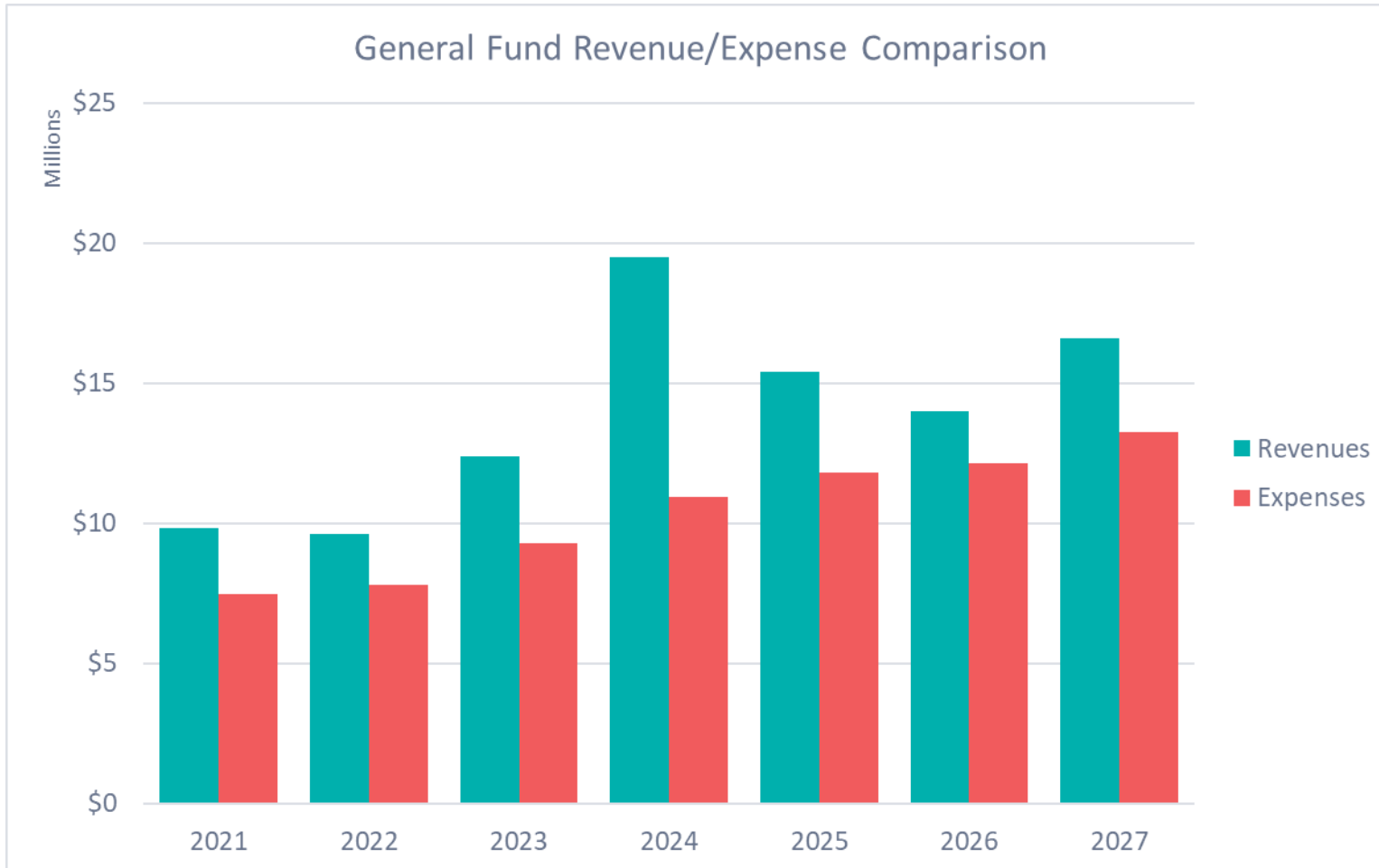
General Fund - Expenditures



- Significant expenditure growth in recent years.
 - General Govt. expenses rose 16% in FY2023 and 21% in FY2024.
 - Public Safety expenses grew 26% in FY2023 and 23% in FY2024.



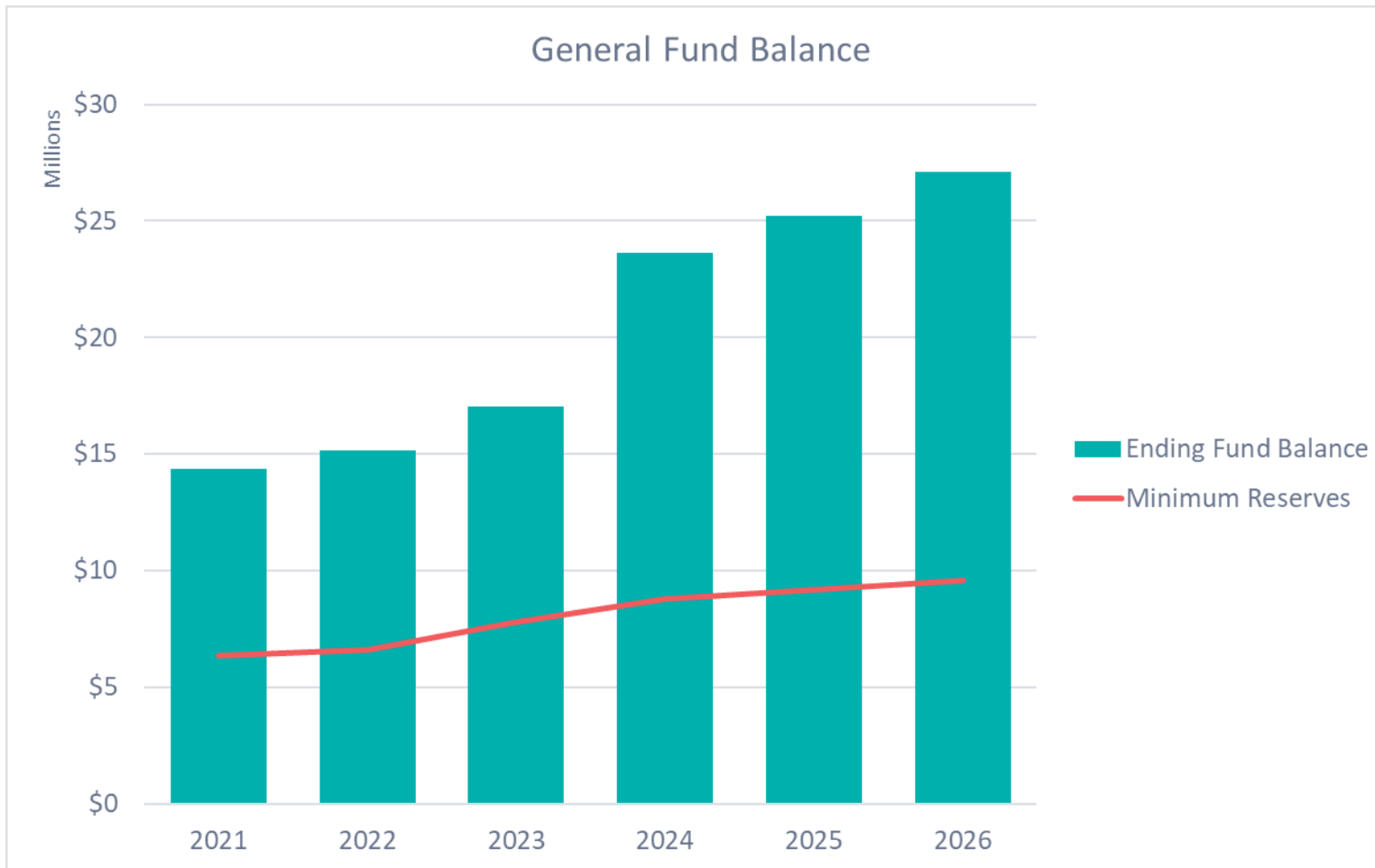
General Fund – Expenditures (cont.)



- Revenues have consistently been higher than expenses.
- Difference is exaggerated by ARPA funding.



General Fund – Fund Balance



- Fund balance has been rising.
- Big jump in FY2024 from ARPA funds.
- Reserves include:
 - Emergency reserve
 - Economic Downturn
 - Building/Vehicle/Equip
 - Technology reserve
 - Contingency reserve
 - Operating reserve



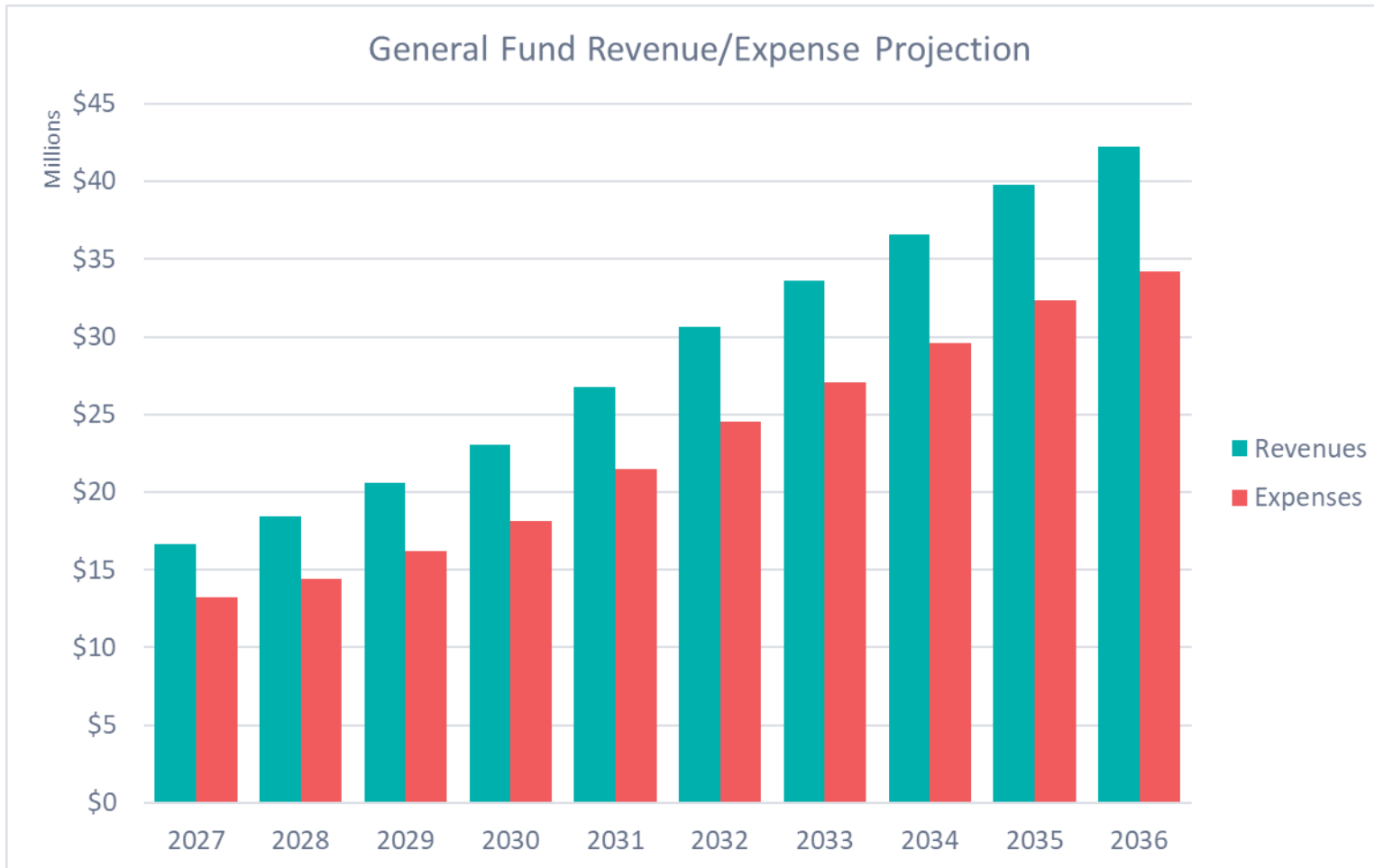
Operating Assumptions

- Property tax levy stays constant
 - Property tax revenues rise with development
- Other revenues grow at 2.0%
- Property values appreciate at 3.0% annually
- Personnel costs grow 3.0% annually
 - Health insurance grows at 6.0%
 - Pension costs grow 4% annually
- Supplies, services, utilities, other operating costs rise 3.0% annually
- Development based on Planning estimates
 - Consistent with development projections used in Water study

Projections

- Projections based on FY26 and FY27 budgets.
- Baseline values inflate annually based on list of assumptions.
- Department payroll expenses grow proportionally with projected new hires.

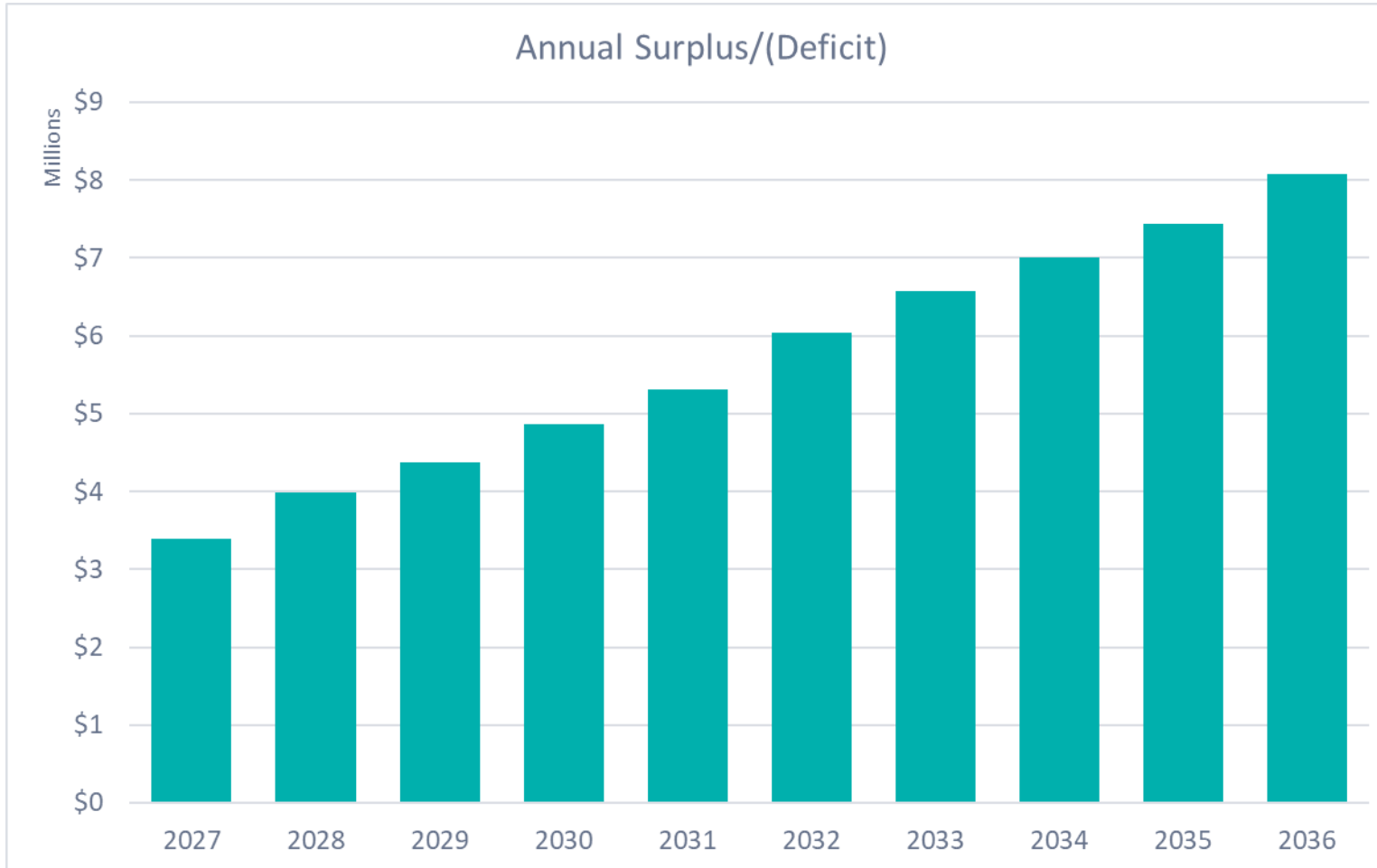
General Fund – Projected Revenue and Expense



- Projections show operating revenues staying ahead of expenditures.



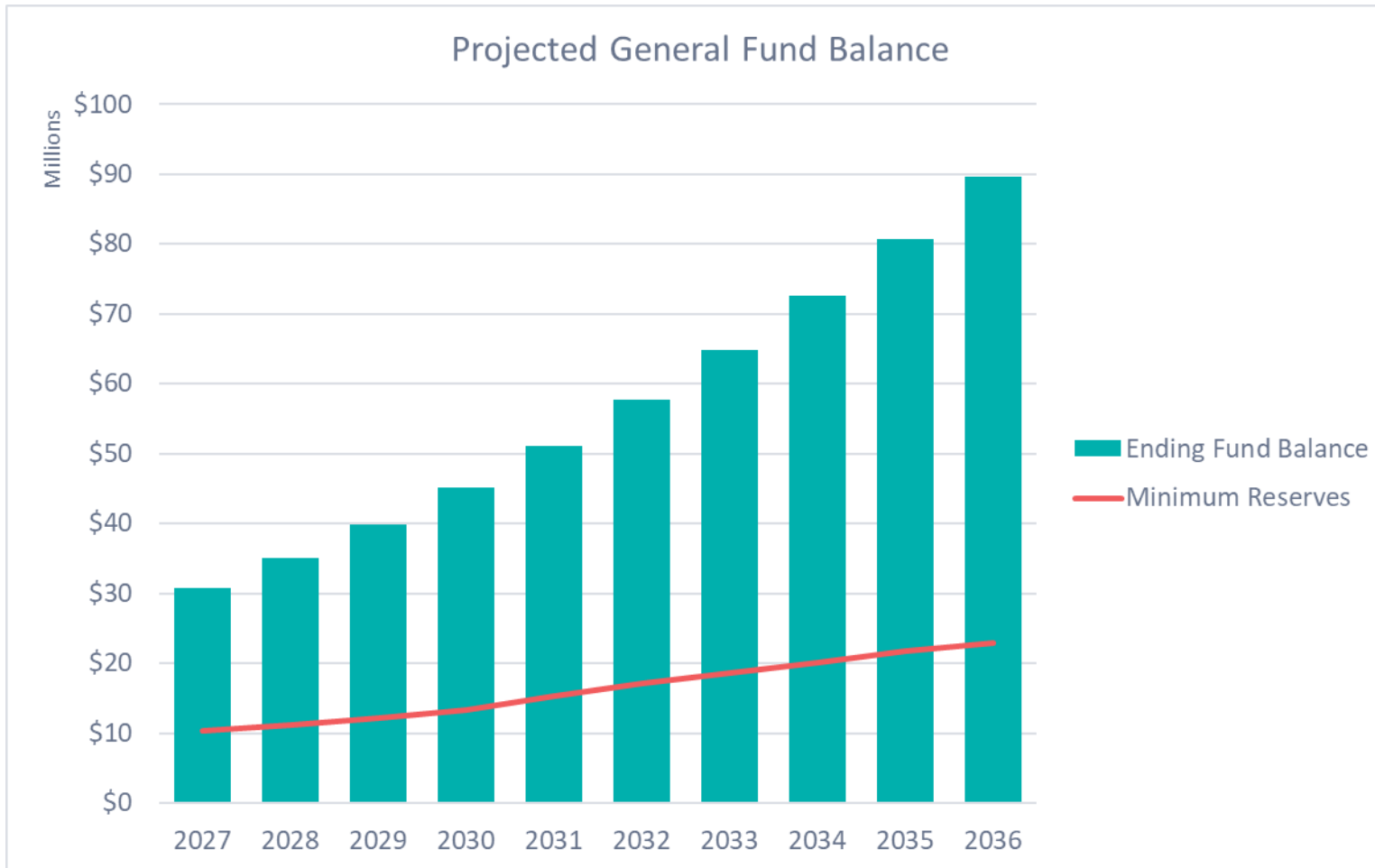
General Fund – Annual Surplus/(Deficit)



- Operating surplus is projected to grow from \$3.4 million in FY 2027 to \$8.0 million in FY 2036.



General Fund – Projected Fund Balance



- Projections show fund balance growing to nearly \$90 million by FY 2036.
- Additional staffing growth, new municipal services, and capital outlays may affect these projections profoundly.



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Police Pension Impacts

Initial Impacts

- We were asked to examine potential impacts of switching police pension costs to LEOPS option.
- Budgeted costs for FY 2027 would be approximately \$880,000, compared to approximately \$375,000 under previous system.
- Projected FY 2027 surplus of \$3.4 million would be reduced to \$2.9 million.

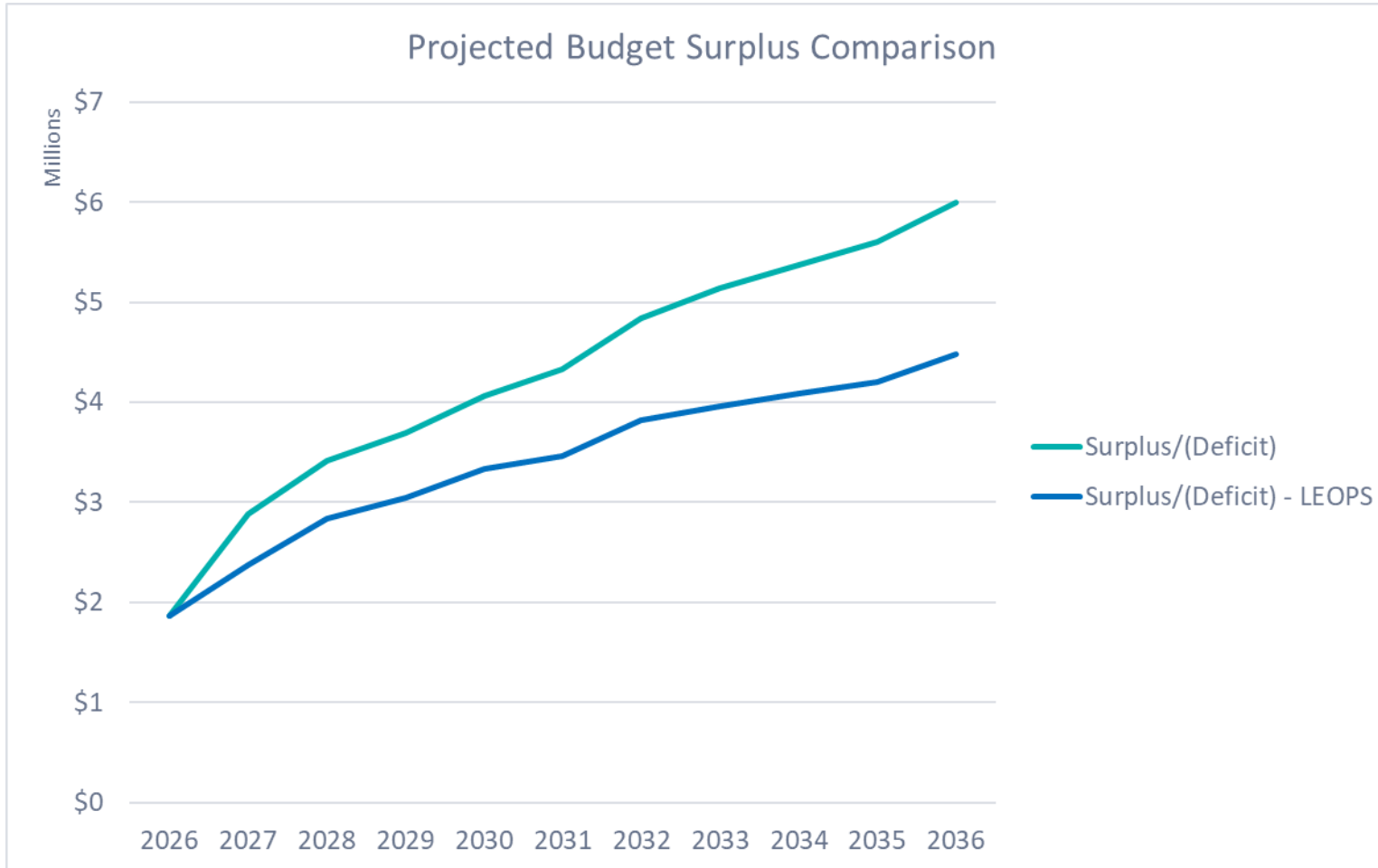
Pension Cost Projections



- Costs in each scenario grow based on annual inflation compounded by anticipated growth in police force.
- LEOPS cost expected to be approximately \$1.0 million higher than baseline projection by FY 2032, and \$1.5 million by FY 2036.



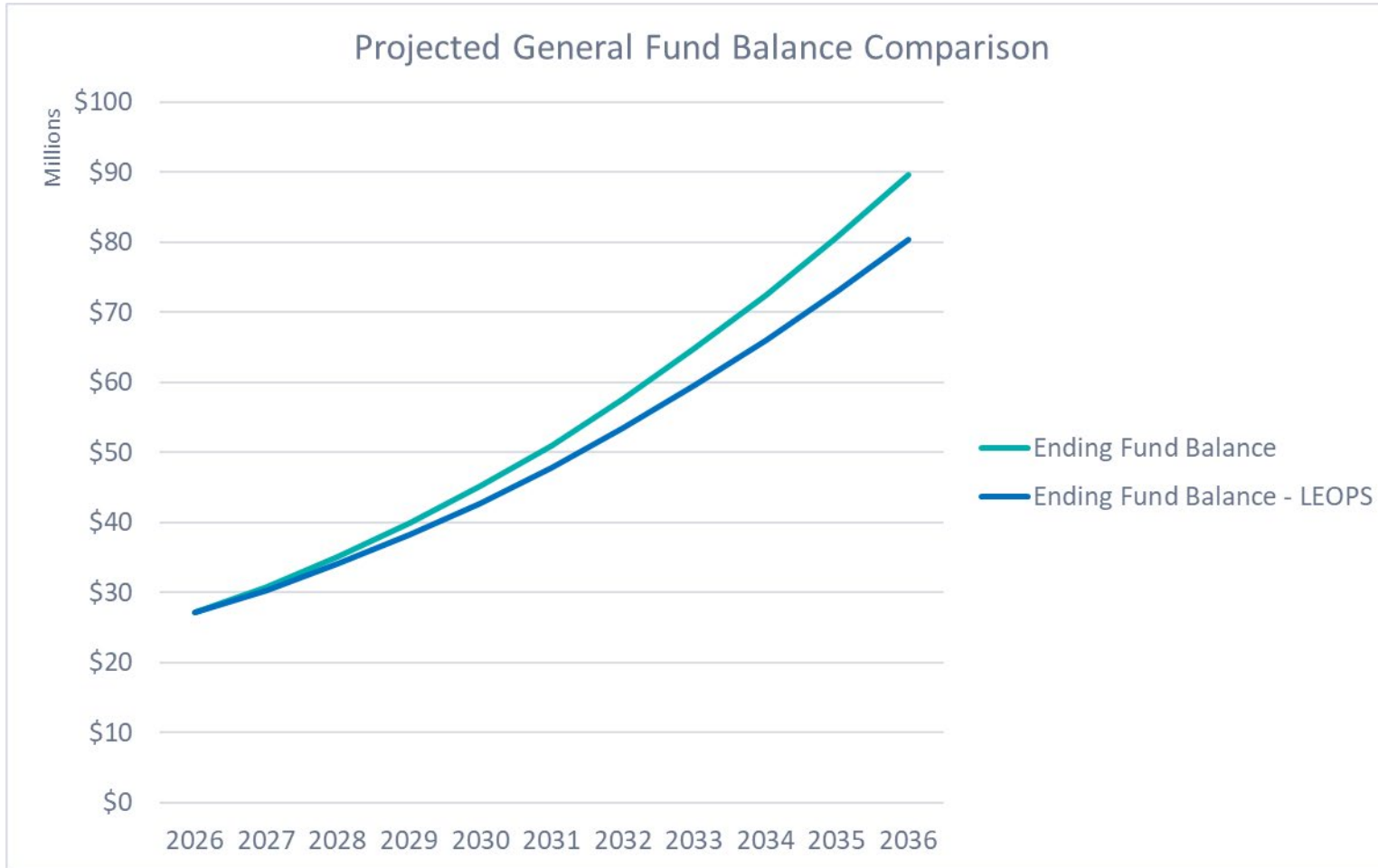
Impact on Projected Surplus



- Projected budget surplus of \$6.0 million in FY 2032 would be reduced to \$5.0 million.
- FY 2036 surplus would be \$6.6 million instead of \$8.1 million.
- In percentage terms, LEOPS would reduce annual surplus by 15% next year, growing to 20% of surplus by FY 2036.



Impact on Projected Fund Balance



- Cumulative impact of higher pension costs would slow growth in fund balance.
- FY 2036 fund balance would be \$80.3 million instead of \$89.6 million.



Observations

- Higher pension costs will reduce expected annual surplus amounts by 15% to start.
- Significant surpluses remain, but funds pledged to pension costs will not be available for other municipal services or capital needs.

Questions?

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