

City of Rochester Hills
2020-2022 Proposed Budget
City Council Questions / Administrative Responses

Planning TA 36 and 37

Q: *Why doesn't Planning have its own line item for legal fees?*

A: Legal fee revenues are covered in account 101.611006 Charge for Service Planning (page 3 of the TA) which includes the costs associated with both city staff and attorney reviews based on hourly rates. For example, site condominiums have an additional \$500 fee for review of the Master Deed by the City Attorney. Other development projects bill the city's cost for services for any outside consultant to the applicant's escrow account. We are currently reviewing our fee schedule and will be making recommendations on updating it within the next few months. [Roediger]

2008 v 2019 taxable properties

Q: *I know you are planning to show some taxable value history numbers, e.g., we are still about \$250,000,000 below our 2008 peak. I'm hoping you can also show the difference between tax properties / parcels in 2008 versus today: single family, condos, apartments, and other commercial.*

Not only was the taxable value higher in 2008, it was divided by / borne by a smaller number of parcels. This is one of our great stories: with all the building, renovation, awards, etc. we are still a quarter-billion dollars below our taxable value peak. Second, there is often a knee-jerk reaction to any discussion of spreading more of the available millage. NOTE: Taxes and City services are PAID in DOLLARS not MILLS. In actual tax dollars paid, the typical 2019 homeowner's burden is smaller than it was eleven years ago. Their property values have returned but their tax obligations reduced. Just want to provide some context. Thanks.

A: 2019's TV is \$3,632,970,260. We are still \$109,683,930 (3%) below the 2008 peak. The average real property (all classifications included) taxable value in 2008 was \$140,000 and 2019 was \$135,000. [Taylor]

Assessing Staff

Q: *How many more people do you need to comply with the STC/AMAR requirements, and what can happen if the State does an audit and finds the City is not in compliance?*

A: Our department went through an AMAR review in 2016 and passed successfully. We have a well versed and cross-trained staff that has a tremendous handle on their responsibilities. We do have one more currently vacant position in our budget that we anticipate filling in the spring which will meet our departmental needs. Rochester Hills Assessing continues to be known as the best of best in our industry. Thank you for your concern. [Taylor]

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Budget questions

Q: *What funding source is used for storm water maintenance and repair?*

A: Storm Water maintenance & repair (operations) of approx. \$600k per year are primarily funded via a transfer-in to the 244-Water Resources Fund from the 101-General Fund of approx. \$500k per year. Other funding sources of approx. \$100k per year are from charges for services.

Any storm water capital projects are to be funded through the 420-Capital Improvement Fund. [Snyder]

Fund Balance Policy Summary

Q: *I don't know if it's part of this evening's presentation or not. Would it be possible to begin the evening with a brief summary of the Fund Balance Policy results, i.e., all fund balances are at the prescribed levels and how much money—per specific fund—was moved into capital improvement fund balances.*

That would be a great context for the rest of the evening: No matter what other budget considerations are described, the fund balance policy has been implemented and produced the desired results.

A: I will be referring to the Fund Balance Policy often in my opening presentation, with charts illustrating how the City's major operating funds (GF, Local Streets, Fire, Police) are set and maintained at their pre-determined fund balance levels = which in the end provides the funding sources for the City's major capital funds (Capital Improvement Fund, Fire Fund).

Implementing the Fund Balance Policy provides for greater transparency of the City's various fund reserves, more security in knowing what level of reserves to maintain in the City's operating funds, and improved decision making in planning for capital projects. [Snyder]

Travel

Q1: *What's the overall travel budget for all departments combined?*

A1: \$312,550 Citywide [Snyder]

Q2: *Which department now does not have a travel budget?*

A2: To my knowledge all departments/cost centers that have mileage or attend educational conferences have a Travel & Seminars budget [Snyder]

Q3: *And I suspect in the recession that hits in the next year or so that the travel budgets will go away?*

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A3: All budgets and line items are reviewed each year at minimum to ensure the City maintains its structural surplus and can continue to prosper long-term. Acknowledging that a recession in the next 1-2 years is indeed likely, revenues for this 2020-2022 Budget were projected very conservatively including future taxable value growth, State-Shared revenues, Act 51 gasoline tax, Building Department fees, etc...

Conservatively projecting City revenues helps to ensure that funds will be available to support the corresponding expenditure levels. If the next recession is to a level that we need to further reduce our conservative revenue projections, then any and all expenditures (both operating & capital projects) will be reviewed and adjusted = including travel & seminars.

Whereas travel & seminar budgets may be reduced during a recession, all spending will not go away. Many staff members (myself included) have worked hard to attain certifications for their positions, or a certification may be for their positions, typically some level of continuing education is required to maintain those credentials. [Snyder]

Salary increases

Q1: I noticed on all the percentage of increases on the salaries across all the departments were up around 6% Some as high as 9%. I just want to make sure that this is going to be sustainable going forward?

A1: As we conservatively project revenues, Yes = the compensation philosophy, salary schedule, and the proposed 2020 full-time and part-time positions requested are included in the long-term financial plan and are sustainable long-term.

The new salary schedule has six (6) steps. Employees meeting their performance expectations are able to earn a step increase each year up to the 6th (and final) step. The Salary schedule implementation started in FY 2018, so FY 2020 will mark year #3 of its implementation. As time goes along more and more employees will reach the top step of their pay grade and will then simply receive an annual cost-of-living adjustment each year (and not an additional step increase) which will slow the rate of salary increases moving forward. [Snyder]

Q2: How close are we aligned with the current market value for all of our city positions?

A2: The goal of the Compensation Philosophy and Salary Schedule was to pay City employees at 55% of market. From the initial schedules developed projecting the budget impacts long-term, for FY 2020 we should be around 53% of market. By 2023, after the new schedule has been in place long enough for all 2018 employees (when new schedule went into effect) to reach step #6, it is projected that those employees will be at 55% = newer employees will be somewhere on the schedule and working their way up to 55%. [Snyder]

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Water fund transfers from general fund

Q: On page 51 of the technical Appendix I see there's a transfer out from the general fund the water resources fund. Is that really necessary?

A: The transfer-out from the General Fund to the Water Resources Fund (Storm Water) is to balance the City's Storm Water operations as there is little dedicated Storm Water funding. The Storm Water Fund is projected to keep its Fund Balance at a level amount until a dedicated funding source for Storm Water is determined.

There is a draw down in the Water & Sewer Operating fund to smooth rate increases (option #3) over the next few years to set the Water & Sewer Operating fund at its prescribed fund balance target.

There is also a proposed draw down in the Water & Sewer Capital Fund in 2020-2022 due to the aging of the City's Water & Sewer system infrastructure as a large proportion of the City's W&S infrastructure is at or nearing 50-years in service. [Snyder]

LS-15 and LS-17 page 51 proposed budget

Q: Do these two items need to be adjusted to show that the City share is going to be closer to 60%, and not 40%?

A: The Bolinger and Michelson SAD project went to City Council for acceptance of the Engineer's Report and scheduling of the Public Hearing on Necessity on July 29th. We also received an updated construction cost from the design engineer on July 29th that was too late to reflect in the engineer's report.

The good news is that the construction estimate for each project went down. Since we typically budget for construction engineering (CE) and geotechnical services based on the construction estimate, these budget values will also be decreasing.

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Bolinger Street:

Construction (Contractor Payments)	\$ 349,104.00	
Construction Engineering	\$ 52,370.00	
Geotechnical	\$ 8,730.00	
Design	\$ 24,036.00	
TOTAL Project Cost	\$ 434,240.00	
Capped Resident Share	\$ 12,398.76	
# of Residents / Bolinger	13	
SAD Resident Share / Bolinger	\$ 161,183.88	37.1%
SAD City Share	\$ 273,056.12	62.9%

Michelson Road:

Construction (Contractor Payments)	\$ 507,804.00	
Construction Engineering	\$ 76,170.00	
Geotechnical	\$ 12,700.00	
Design	\$ 34,588.00	
TOTAL Project Cost	\$ 631,262.00	
Capped Resident Share	\$ 12,398.76	
# of Residents / Michelson	18	
SAD Resident Share / Michelson	\$ 223,177.68	35.4%
SAD City Share	\$ 408,084.32	64.6%

In the event that City Council inquires about the expected cost sharing split for the projects, the engineering design cost also needs to be considered. City Council awarded a combined design contract to Nowak & Fraus for \$58,624.00 on January 28, 2019. Splitting this total based on construction cost percentages of (41% for Bolinger and 59% for Michelson) gives \$24,036 design engineering apportionment to Bolinger and \$34,588 to Michelson.

Total project cost for Bolinger is added to be \$434,240.00. The resident share at the capped amount adjusted to inflation equals \$161,183.88 (13 x \$12,398.76) or 37.1% of the total cost.

Total project cost for Michelson is added to be \$631,262.00. The resident share at the capped amount adjusted to inflation equals \$223,177.68 (18 x \$12,398.76) or 35.4% of the total cost. [P. Davis]

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A: Fiscal will update the respective SAD/City splits for the two (2) projects as part of the Final Budget Document. The 2020 Proposed Budget amounts for the respective SAD projects [\$494,250 for Bolinger & \$757,000 for Michelson] look to be adequate for the projects per the most recent construction estimate. [Snyder]

651001 Rental:Fields TA p5

Q: *What's going on that we think our field rentals are going to go up 10%?*

A: We are planning to bring a recommended rental price increase to Council this Fall. [Elwert]

802001 MIS TA 25

Q: *This line item is proposed to increase 68.6%. Can I get an explanation why?*

A: When the video storage server down here in Media failed, Dan and I had to temporarily store our large video files on the (*Internal City*) I drive for while. Those files have since been removed, but were still there when the storage usage sampling was performed by MIS looking at who uses how much storage to allocate out their MIS charge. [J. Dale]

Q: *Also, are we no longer using cable access, and solely going to YouTube?*

A: Yes, we still use our cable channel and YouTube. YouTube views continue to rise. [J. Dale]

802005 Cemetery Facilities TA 28

Q: *Why the nearly 200% increase?*

A: The new pole barn depreciation cost added to the Facilities Interfund charge, the Cemetery's water bill was up, possibly to maintain new landscaping, and they had a new alarm system installed for \$7k that increased the bottom line Facilities charge. [Snyder]

860000 crossing guard seminars TA 30

Q: *Why do we think they are going to start going to seminars when they have never gone before?*

A: This is to establish an annual budget amount for Crossing Guard mileage (charged to same account). We have fewer individuals willing to be Crossing Guard employees causing the existing Crossing Guards to sometimes have to work at different locations each day. Providing mileage reimbursement for the Crossing Guards (going between locations only – not the commute to/from work) helps to compensate them for providing their services to multiple locations in the same day. [Snyder]

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HSA's

Q: Generally speaking, all departments are projecting a significant increase. Can you tell me why?

A: More employees are opting (especially the newer/younger employees) for the High-Deductible Healthcare plan which qualifies for a City contribution into the employee's Health Savings Account (HSA). The HSA can be used by the employee to cover their higher out-of-pocket costs associated with the High-Deductible Healthcare Plan (at a lower cost to the City).

The shift to the higher-deductible plans, a younger trending workforce, and an active City Wellness Committee have had positive impacts on the City's healthcare claims, and corresponding healthcare costs. [Snyder]

756 Parks Dept TA 42 and 43

Q: 740000 - why the 46.3% increase in operating supplies?

A: Increased maintenance supplies, & lumber for all the City parks [Elwert]

Q: 947000 - who from and why are we renting a land and building?

A: This related to the Pine Trace Golf Course agreement. Per the contract with Golf Concepts, Inc. there is a parcel of land on Pine Trace Golf Course owned by Consumers Power. The taxes are first paid by Consumers Power; then in accordance with a lease between the City, Consumers Power, and Golf Concepts, Inc.; Consumers Power bills Golf Concepts to recover their costs. In turn, Golf Concepts, Inc. bills the City to recover their costs. In the end, the City pays the taxes for this parcel.

This issue has been discussed with Consumers Power, Golf Concepts, Inc., and John Staran. It was agreed that it is more efficient and expeditious for the City to make the appropriate adjusting entry to pay the property taxes for this parcel. [Snyder]

TA 58 Adams Road Widening

Q: This is noted in the Technical Appendix as having no CIP. Has the County indicated they will be widening Adams from Hamlin to Walton, and if so, what do you know about timing and any other specifics?

A: We have partnered with the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) and Oakland University on a feasibility study earlier this year for the widening of Adams to Walton. No timing specifics as this would be a huge undertaking but a couple of concepts were discussed. [Schneck]

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703000 Elections Salaries

Q1: Why the 60% plus increase?

A1: There is always a significant increase in elections the year of the Presidential. We will have three elections next year, instead of the normal two elections. There is a very minor increase of \$20 per day pay for election inspectors. They have not had an increase since 2013. This will keep us competitive with other municipalities. [Barton]

Q2: It's still a greater than 33% increase over 2016. I assume the new salary schedule has something to do with it, but it cannot be the sole cause. Operating supply cost also has gone up similarly since 2016.

A2: In regards to the salary increase, we initially increased the budget to \$270,000 - allowing for a small increase in pay for the election inspectors, as well as acknowledging the impact of the salary study for the Election's Clerk. After conversations about the unknown impact of Proposal 3's passage on staff time, we felt it was safer to add more dollars to this total instead of possibly going over budget. As you know with the passage of Proposal 3, we now have No Reason AV's, as well as voter registration that can take place up to and even on Election Day. In the past, registration would stop 30 days prior to the election. Staff would have time to input all registrations before Election Day. Now, we are anticipating that overtime or the usage of part-time temporary election staff will be necessary in order to make sure that the voter registration database is up-to-date and current. We also may need to hire temp election staff to do nothing but register voters on Election Day. Additionally, Proposal 3 also required that we be open longer hours on the weekend prior to Election Day. The impact of No Reason AV is already being felt across the state. In this area, we are also recognizing that we may be paying extra hours for staff to keep up with the workload. We must send out an absentee ballot within 24 hours of receiving a request. For the City election held recently, over 81% of the ballots cast in the City were done by absentee ballot. If that trend continues or even comes close to that number, staff will definitely be working many extra hours to keep up or we may need to hire temporary election staff to help with the load. [Barton]

Q3: Should we be putting even more \$\$ towards elections?

A3: Thank you for understanding. We have put a lot of thought into the budget and feel that the current number is reasonable. We will be keeping a close eye on the staffing required, the cost of supplies, and the overall workload throughout next year. We will alert Joe immediately if we feel that the projected amount might fall short. I appreciate your questions and that you gave me an opportunity to respond to them. [Barton]

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Q: Also on the same page, 740000, operating supplies, up over 100%. Is this related to the no reason absentee/same day registration? If so, have we looked at whether or not this is an unfunded mandate that the State should pay for?

A: In regards to the operating supplies, nearly every form we use in elections is in the process of being changed due to Proposal 3. The design of AV envelopes will also be new for 2020. We will purchase thousands of envelopes next year with three elections scheduled. Given the political climate, we are anticipating very high turnouts. Additionally, we need to purchase some replacement ballot bags. They are starting to show wear; some of the zippers are broken. Any ballot bag with even a minor hole or tear is deemed to not be recountable. Should we need to recount a precinct for any reason, this would be a problem. Lastly, we need to purchase some voting booths. We are phasing out the old ones...many are leftover from the punch card days. We had to use these old ones during the 2016 and 2018 elections so that there were plenty at the precinct. The lights have gone out in most and the legs frequently fall off.

I don't consider any of these items unfunded mandates because they are not a result of the State making a new rule and telling us we have to follow it. These changes are voter mandates. The voters of this state passed a proposal that requires that we change the way that we do business.

Our staff is very conscientious about tracking every single item that we purchase for elections and tallying these items in a spreadsheet so that we can be reimbursed for the maximum amount possible. We also track every single minute of paid staff time for the election. We always receive one of the highest reimbursements in the state because of the detailed records that we keep. For the August election, we consolidated our precincts from 32 to 22 precincts. We did this to help save the City money. This meant that we had to hire 60 fewer people than normal, we only needed one Uhaul truck instead of two, fewer hours were spent after 5 p.m. training workers, etc.

The increase in the budget for 2020 is somewhat of a crapshoot for Clerks. We haven't felt the full impact of Proposal 3 and won't be able to correctly judge for future elections until we complete an election cycle. [Barton]

202 Major Road Fund TA 59

Q: 703000 Salaries and Wages have gone up for over 100% since 2016, and are proposed to go up 16.6% since last year. Is this because of how employee time is allocated in conjunction with the salary schedule being implemented? As an example, Salaries and wages are down 22.6% for 472 Traffic Service TA 61. Same question as to the 32% increase in 203 Local Street Fund 474 Traffic Service, TA 75.

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A: Any large swings in DPS related Salaries & Wages is primarily due to the reallocation of DPS employee hours (or employee splits) among the various DPS funds and cost centers based on where the employees are anticipated to spend their time in FY 2020 and beyond. A portion is due to salary schedule, but primarily due to allocation splits. [Snyder]

331 Drain Debt TA 120

Q: *Cremation costs? Related to the Drain Debt?*

A: These are the administration costs charged by the managing bank associated with the debt service. The term 'cremation costs' is an older term dating back to when they used to physically burn (or cremate) the principal and interest coupons/receipts as they are serviced (Lee Zendel told me about it). Pretty sure this is all done electronically now, but the term 'cremation' lives on in relation to administration of the debt service. [Snyder]

OPC Building TA 121

Q: *I see there's a substantial increase in needed funds from fund balance. Is this because we have not been collecting enough in taxes to pay the debt?*

A: When the OPC Building was completed in 2002, the surplus construction dollars were deposited in the OPC Building Debt Fund to be used over the life of the remaining debt service. The goal at the end of 2021 (when the OPC Building Debt will be fully serviced) is to have \$0 left in that fund = it is levied specifically to service the OPC Debt.

There will be \$110k left in the OPC Building Debt Fund as of 12/31/2019 which is planned to be drawn down over the final two (2) years of debt service. The use of this fund's balance over the last two (2) years will reduce the amount of taxes that will need to be collected to service the rest of the debt. [Snyder]

203 Local Street Fund TA 68

Q: *Should all of the numbers for all line items dealing with the Bolinger and Michelson be changed based on our discussion at the last Council meeting? Add TA page 69 to that, which shows a City share of cost at 40%. And TA 72 - same reason. And TA 132.*

A: Total project cost for Bolinger is added to be \$434,240.00. The resident share at the capped amount adjusted to inflation equals \$161,183.88 (13 x \$12,398.76) or 37.1% of the total cost.

Total project cost for Michelson is added to be \$631,262.00. The resident share at the capped amount adjusted to inflation equals \$223,177.68 (18 x \$12,398.76) or 35.4% of the total cost. [P. Davis]

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A: With these updated construction estimates, the City will update the respective SAD/City splits for the two (2) projects as part of the Final Budget Document. [Snyder]

760 Community Events TA 45

Q: *880000 Community Promotions - exactly what are we going to be spending \$93,630 on?*

A: This line item primarily contains the costs for the fireworks for both the Festival of the Hills and the Winter Event @ the Village, also an allotment included for the stage, sound system, etc... Offsetting revenue received in account #: 101.975002 / General Fund / Contributions & Donations: Fireworks (page #5 of TA). [Snyder]

774 Natural Resources Division TA 46

Q: *Why the significant increases in the operating supplies line items (740000 and 740011)?*

A: Due to additional Outdoor Engagement Programs. [Elwert]

206 Fire Department 206 Admin

Q: *On TA 82 by 2022, it looks like our fire inspection fees are projected to increase by nearly \$300k from the 2019 budgeted amount, with an overall revenue increase from all activities of over \$700k. At the same time, 341 Community Risk Reduction, TA 88-89, shows an increase in costs from all activities of about \$360k.*

A: Correct, the proposal presented before the Public Safety & Infrastructure Committee and recommended to City Council was to add two (2) additional Fire Inspectors and begin to charge a Fire Inspection Fee for Commercial & Industrial building inspections to reimburse the Fire Department / Community Risk Reduction Division for the staff time involved in performing the Fire Inspections. It is proposed for the cost of the Community Risk Reduction Division to increase from roughly \$780k in FY 2019 to \$1.135M in FY 2022 (an increase of \$355k). The revenue generated from Fire Inspections on Commercial & Industrial facilities is anticipated to generate approximately \$300k per year to help reimburse and offset a portion of the Community Risk Reduction Division costs. [Snyder]

Q1: *Please advise if increasing/starting to charge fees for yearly inspections has been vetted by John Staran for potential Bolt implications, and whether we have proper documentation that the inspection fees are not a revenue-raising mechanism and are instead a true fee simply meant to cover the costs of providing the service.*

Q2: *Do you agree that unless it can be specifically established that the fees are not a revenue raising tool (aka a tax), that we should not start charging the fee*

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A2: I had a very productive meeting w/ Joe S and Chiefs Canto and Gary this afternoon which filled in a lot of missing information and increased my comfort level. There are a few steps that we discussed that need to be implemented to make this program work, but I think it's possible to enhance our inspection program and to charge inspection fees without running afoul of Bolt. [Staran]

226 Solid Waste TA 105/106

Q: *The 42.5% increase, is that how much more our residents paying under the new contract with GFL?*

A: This is for a full year of fees to SOCRRA, No Haz, and RecycleBank (12-months), as compared to last year's partial fees (9-months). [Snyder]

880000 Comm. Promos TA 10

Q: *This item has nearly doubled since 2017. Can you tell what it is being spent on?*

A: Items in this account include: New Resident Welcome packets, School Tours, Memorial Day Dues, Christmas Parade Dues, Social Media Outreach (Facebook event notifications), and an increasing number of Special Community Events including the Senior Expo at OPC, Job Fairs, Girl Scout events, etc... Typically this account comes in under budget as the Mayor's Office staff works within the annual amount budgeted. [Snyder]

209 Assessing Department p109

Q: *Do you need more staff? How are you completing 600 appraisals a year with a total of 6 people in your department on top of everything else you have to do? How many parcels are there in the City?*

A: We do have one currently vacant position budgeted that we hope to fill next year for a total of 7 people. We have nearly 28,000 parcels in the city including all residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property. Visiting and appraising 600 properties is doable. In fact, if you consider reappraisal, residential exterior reviews, all real property permits, and sales verification, we could typically review a few thousand properties during a normal year. However, the State Tax Commission has adopted the guideline calling for the annual inspection of a minimum of 20% of the parcels. That would be over 5,000 parcels and beyond our staffing capabilities. [Taylor]

Page 56 Plan Book

Q: *On page 56 the DPS garage EVR #1 and #2: are they the same vent or 2 different vents? Why is one more than the other.*

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A: They are two different units. ERV #1 is a 15 ton unit that supplies the heating, cooling, and ventilation to the DPS locker room. ERV #2 is a larger 30 ton unit that supplies the heating, cooling, and ventilation to the sign shop, water shop, and the meter shop. [Cope]

Page 5 of the Community Profile

Q: *Henry Ford no longer has a medical facility in Rochester Hills, we have a data management center and a pharmacy distribution center in Rochester Hills. I'm not sure if combined they employ 300 people as listed on page 8.*

A: Fiscal will review and update for the Final Budget Plan document. [Snyder]

On page 4 of the budget book

Q: *We list that there are 1,000 acres of parkland in our city. Can I get that in a percentage of our total land mass? Is there any city guidelines on how much park land a city should have?*

A: Parks (Including Rail Trails) and Green Spaces we have 932 acres, if you include Pine Trace Golf Course, which is our property, but leased out, we have 1,126 acres. 1,126 Acres is about 5% of our City's acreage of 32.9 Sq miles. Standards collected in 2018 from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) from the 61 Cities nationwide with populations between 50,000-100,000:

Bottom line, we have a smaller number (bottom quartile) of large parks (almost upper quartile in acreage) that are heavily used (almost upper quartile). See attached 1 - page report for detail. [Elwert]

Innovation Hills

Q: *Innovation hills estimated total project is listed at \$13,146,310. How much of that is from Grants?*

A: We have raised \$2,366,000 to date for grants, private donations, and in-kind services. This includes a very soon to be announced large grant. We are pursuing another \$450k in grants & state appropriations and should receive notice by January.

Please also note that this fundraising has to do with the first 3 phases of the park (Infrastructure, Water Area, & Playground). We have not started fundraising for the next 3 phases yet (Overlooks, Community Shelter, & River Crossing). [Elwert]

Q: Was the \$13 million for all 6 phase or just the first 3 phases?

A: \$13 Million is for all six phases. [Elwert]