

**Questions regarding the Budget Presentation for  
Office of the City Clerk 8/29/24  
City Clerk Nicole Bolden**

**Councilmember Piedmont-Smith's Question**

What are the outcomes you hope to achieve in 2025, and how will your budget proposal help you get there?

Board and Commission appointments completed within 2 months of vacancy/publication-

Minutes prepared within 2 weeks of meeting-

Parking citation appeals processed and completed within 2 weeks of receipt-

Funding for the new staff member to have the primary role of working with B&C, with additional support from the administration and council, will allow other staff members to focus on their respective duties. Continuing to fund supplies, education, and staff will allow for successful outcomes, rather than seeing staff spend time trying to compensate for a lack of resources.

**Questions regarding the Budget Presentation for  
Office of the City Council 8/29/24  
Interim Attorney/Administrator Ash Kulak**

**Councilmember Stosberg's Question**

- 1) How long have the \$1000 and \$800 bonuses for President and Vice President been in place? How can we change that to more adequately compensate for the additional work the President and Vice-President do?

The stipend was first given in 2019 by the 2018 Salary Ordinance for Elected Officials.

The stipend did not exist in 2018.

It has not been increased since it was first provided and it could be increased by adding a higher amount in the Ordinance you pass this year for 2025.

**Questions regarding the Budget Presentation for  
Office of the Mayor 8/29/24  
Deputy Mayor Gretchen Knapp**

**Councilmember Stosberg’s Question**

1) I would like to see a chart of the mayoral salary changes over the last 5 years. Thank you!

Mayor’s Salary  
 2014 - \$97,373.28  
 2015 - \$99,321  
 2016 - \$101,307  
 2017 - \$103,333  
 2018 - \$105,400  
 2019 - \$107,508  
 2020 - \$114,558  
 2021 - \$121,847  
 2022 - \$125,198  
 2023 - \$131,458  
 2024 - \$138,031

All OOTM positions (data unavailable for 2015/14):

	Positions	Personnel Budget
2024	8	1,014,444.00
2023	8	962,490.00
2022	8	904,487.00
2021	8	872,031.00
2020	8	845,000.00
2019	8	822,989.00
2018	7	724,151.00
2017	6	618,944.00
2016	4	430,298.00
2015	4	
2014	5	

**Councilmember Piedmont-Smith’s Questions**

1) What are the 1-year plans and the 3-year plans of your administration that are referenced in the budget book (specifically in ITS, page 330 of budget book PDF)? Are the 1-year plans the same as the 1-year goals summarized at the end of the OOTM budget memo?

Yes, these are 1-year and 3-year goals from the Cabinet’s retreat in June. The 1-year goals were all listed in the budget book and were only finalized in late July. The 3-year

goals are still in a raw state from post-its and have not been evaluated/wordsmithed yet to share.

2) How has the City Council been part of developing the above action plans?

It would be helpful to separate the idea of goals—which is what Cabinet created during our retreat to lay out our work together—and action plans, which might include existing plans such as the Transportation Plan, the housing plans required by HUD, the Heading Home plan, etc., as well as new plans that are needed but don't exist yet. The goals are not action plans themselves. The action plans referenced within some goals are largely existing plans that have already gone through City Council. Some goals relate to new plans that we need to develop: for example, long-term financial plans and aging facilities plans (for Parks and Public Works, for example). These new plans would either come to Council for consideration and funding, or simply provide information (in the case of financial forecasting and planning) to improve our budgeting work together in the future. Some, such as the Comprehensive Plan HAND is working on, are required by HUD. Many goals are operational: how can we execute more efficiently with limited resources? What software we use, how we turn HR processes from paper to truly digital, how to make contracting and procurement forms more efficient, etc.—these are execution issues that do not require legislation or funding from Council (outside of software funding requests in the budget), just improved internal collaboration. Council has created their priorities for funding and legislation; the Cabinet's goals set priorities for execution.

3) Please list all the Action Plans under Goal 1: Ensure Execution on Action Plans.

The post-its that led to this goal named the need for plans to address these areas: 1) street homelessness, 2) housing, 3) public safety, 4) economic development, and 5) infrastructure.

1) The new Heading Home plan for street homeless, released right before the budget, does contain community-wide needs/actions that would be performed by a collaboration of partners, and we expect to come back to Council with requests related to that plan. We also need a Business and Neighborhood Safety & Vitality Plan to address the impacts of street homelessness on our community, and that work will be completed in 2024.

2) HAND is working on the Consolidated Plan required by HUD, which will address many pieces of a broader Housing Plan that incorporates the work already done through many housing studies. This is described in HAND's budget memo and the planning sessions are ongoing and public.

3) A plan for public safety will need to include many community partners and funding sources to address concerns such as mental health and addiction. We will also need to come up with a plan for where to house BPD and how to pay for it, as the public safety bond will be largely used up. A study by an organization such as LEAP (after RFP) has been added to the plan.

4) ESD is working on a strategic plan to guide their work this year.

5) Infrastructure includes needs such as Public Works facilities. DPW was told in 2017 that a plan for facilities would be developed; it's now 7 years later and there is still no

plan, no needs assessment, no cost estimates, nothing to move forward. Outside of these named plans, we know that there are other plans, such as Parks 5-Year Master Plan, that are driven by external processes, and existing plans, such as the Transportation Plan, that provide guidelines—but without a financial plan, are very difficult to make progress on. So, “Ensure Execution on Action Plans” means more than “create a plan.” It also means “Make sure we know what is needed to execute existing plans.”

- 4) Under Goal 1, the City Council is not listed as a partner under “Plans, Partners, Public Input.” Is this an oversight? How can your administration work with the City Council to ensure budgetary, legislative, and community support to implement the action plans? The role of the OOTM is executive, and our particular role in helping staff execute on action plans lies in setting clear expectations, holding ourselves accountable, and assisting staff in solving problems and removing obstacles. For budgetary and legislative support, of course we will come to Council, and involving the community in co-creation is a stated value for all our work. Council is not listed in the OOTM’s departmental goal as a partner for ensuring execution because execution is our main job. That doesn’t mean Council is excluded from a role in the plans themselves. Please see answers under the OOTM introduction for more detail.
  
- 5) What are the Administration’s plans for the Showers West space? How is the City going to get returns on our investment in Showers West?  
We have not yet created that plan but will discuss with Council. Those are not questions we have answers for yet.

**Questions regarding the Budget Presentation for  
Information Technology Services 8/29/24  
Director Rick Dietz**

**Councilmember Piedmont-Smith's Questions**

- 1) Meridiam pledged a certain amount of funding for digital equity in its deal with the city a few years ago. Could you please review what that commitment was, what it is being used for, and where we see it in your budget proposal?

Yes, Meridiam/HoosierFiberNetworks provides the City with \$85,000 annually for the length of their agreement with the city. This funding goes into the City's Digital Equity fund. It supports the salary of our Digital Equity Specialist position and funds miscellaneous operational expenses of that position.

- 2) Under Goal 2, Outputs, you have "Keep marked utility strikes below 1 per 4 fiber miles. (Currently 1 per 5 fiber miles)." Please explain what this means.

Utilities strikes occur with underground construction, however we want to keep these incidents to a minimum. The goal is to have no more than 1 strike of a properly marked underground utility for every 4 miles of fiber/conduit installed. We are currently doing better than this and are working to improve this even more.

**Questions regarding the Budget Presentation for  
Human Resources Department 8/29/24  
Director Sharr Pechac**

**Councilmember Piedmont-Smith's Question:**

Even though I asked this during the budget hearings, I still don't understand why \$15K is budgeted for an HR website "makeover" when the entire city website needs to be overhauled, and that expense should be in ITS. Could you please explain? It seems like bad precedent to budget funds for "makeovers" of individual dept websites in individual dept budgets. Our web pages need to be viewed holistically for budget, quality, and design purposes.

I requested \$15,000 for an HR website makeover, but I wasn't aware that the entire city website needs to be overhauled, and that cost should be covered by ITS. I'm open to collaborating on a solution, provided that HR's needs are included to ensure we effectively attract and retain talent.

**Councilmember Flaherty's Questions:**

- 1) Could you please share the details of the Sustainable Commuter Benefit program (participation data, rules for participation (e.g., the benefit eligibility form shared with staff), etc.)?

The following information was sent to all City employees on April 9, 2024.

**NEW Sustainable Commuter Benefit**

The new Sustainable Commuter Incentive combines the former Bike to Work Incentive and the Parking Cash Out Program into one. It allows any Regular employee to receive a taxable \$4 incentive (up to a total annual amount of \$500) for each sustainable commute to and from their worksite for a scheduled shift. All Regular Employees qualify regardless of their worksite location. Employees can record sustainable commutes directly in Time Track, and the additional benefit will be added to their biweekly pay.

To add this commute in Time Track, Employees need to have hours posted for the day. They can then add another block by choosing one of two Earn Codes: (1) **COMMUTE\_EXR** for biking or walking to work, and (2) **COMMUTE** for public transportation, carpooling, or using alternative vehicles like electric bikes or scooters. Employees will provide specifics in Time Track (Earn Reason) for analytical purposes only. Once they reach the \$500 annual maximum, they can no longer add this incentive in Time Track.

In 2023, 8 employees used this benefit, and that number has increased to 57 so far in 2024. We expect further growth as we enhance education and awareness about this benefit.

- 2) Same question re: data/details of the Family Medical Leave and Paid Parental Leave. (Participation rates, details/duration of benefit, what percent salary, is one required to use all PTO before claiming the benefit, etc.)

FMLA is a federal benefit that provides job protection, but employees must use their PTO if they qualify for FMLA. In contrast, Paid Parental Leave is a City-provided benefit. At the end of 2022, two employees participated in the Paid Parental Leave pilot program, and participation grew to 20 in 2023. However, only seven employees have participated so far in 2024.

Paid Parental Leave offers up to 6 weeks off, which can be taken continuously or intermittently, and must be used within the first year. Employees receive their full salary during this leave and do not need to use PTO. HR believes that Paid Parental Leave is a valuable incentive for attracting and retaining talent. We expect participation to grow with increased education and awareness.

To be eligible for Paid Parental Leave, employees must meet FMLA requirements, including being employed for at least 12 months.

**Questions posed during Public Comment (all by the same person):**

- 1) Is this budget going to permanently implement paid parental leave? (This was presented last year in the proposed 2024 budget but still remains as a pilot program currently for some reason. This is imperative for workplace equity and staying competitive in the workforce.)

Yes, HR supports making Paid Parental Leave a permanent benefit. We are currently checking with Legal to ensure there are no additional requirements for establishing it permanently. This benefit is crucial for attracting and retaining talent. In 2023, 20 employees used Paid Parental Leave, and 7 employees have used it so far in 2024. We anticipate that participation will increase as we improve education and awareness about this benefit.

- 2) Has it been considered to change the health club reimbursement program to a broader health reimbursement program so all staff can utilize the benefit? (Memberships specifically being reimbursable are considerably more expensive in Bloomington than the benefit offered itself, and if this could be more aligned with the IU Foundation or IUCU then the benefit could be more competitive locally.)

Gym reimbursements have decreased from 101 in 2023 to 93 so far in 2024. This decline might suggest a slight reduction in employee participation in fitness activities, decreased awareness of the benefit, or changes in personal or lifestyle habits. To address this, additional encouragement



or adjustments to the program—such as increasing the reimbursement amount—could help boost participation.

- 3) What is the percentage of employee usage for the Everside health clinic and is this impacted by the limited hours?

The Everside Employee Clinic opened in January 2024. Shortly thereafter, the City of Bloomington was informed of a merger between Everside and Marathon. Here are the utilization numbers for the clinic by unique employees:

January 35,	April 51,	July 40.
February 26,	May 32,	
March 39,	June 33,	

HR believes that the unexpected merger and the clinic's initially limited days and hours of operation significantly impacted these numbers. With the clinic now open five days a week, we expect utilization to increase. Additional growth is anticipated as we provide more education and raise awareness. The clinic will also offer flu shots, COVID vaccinations, and other preventive and wellness appointments. HR will continue to strategically monitor utilization and return on investment.

- 4) Why has the change in the commuter program not included a different reimbursable rate for all employees if they have hybrid vehicles since there is an overall yearly limit for trips that can be reached? (The changed program currently rewards those who own electric vehicles, of which have remained expensive and the average employee at the city cannot afford, which seems to be rewarding those already with a better economic advantage).

This is a valid question that warrants additional research. HR will definitely explore ways to make the commuter program more inclusive, possibly by adjusting reimbursable rates or expanding the benefits to cover hybrid vehicles as well. Ensuring the program supports a wider range of commuting options and is accessible to all employees is a priority. The Commuter program also includes incentives for employees who walk, ride a bike, or carpool to work. These options are more readily available to all employees, regardless of economic status.

- 5) How many employees actually live in the city, how many own in the city, and how many live outside of the city with limited or no access to public transportation, biking, or walking routes? (This data is important in regard to how applicable benefits programs actually are to all employees instead of a few who can take advantage.)

This is a valid question that requires further research. While ITS can provide some relevant data, HR needs more time to collect and analyze data on employee residences and their transportation options. We agree that this data will help us optimize the Sustainable Commuter Incentive for City employees.

HR and ESD also discussed looking at employee residential data to see what cities or areas outside of Bloomington might have clusters of City employees, and are looking for ways to make this benefit more accessible and easier to use for those employees who don't reside within Bloomington city limits.

HR would like to acknowledge the Sustainable Commuter Incentive has been a challenging benefit to optimize because it only applies to a subset of staff due to so many living outside of Bloomington. HR will continue to research strategies to optimize this benefit and we welcome input from additional stakeholders.

**Questions regarding the Budget Presentation for  
Legal Department 8/29/24  
Corporation Counsel Margie Rice**

**Councilmember Piedmont-Smith's Question**

Where does the revenue for the Risk Management Fund come from?

The Risk Management Fund is an interdepartmental service fund. That means that the revenue is based on the cost. The cost is liability insurance, staff to respond to all claims and liability insurance requests, and equipment such as a vehicle, gas, training supplies and safety equipment. Departments pay into the fund based on their historical liability claims. Utilities, Public Works, Sanitation, Fleet, Parking Garages, Parking Meters, Parks, Street Division. The staff inspect accidents, take pictures of the scene or damage, train staff on risk related activities especially cleanups. If a staff person is injured during a clean up - the risk division will get maximum coverage of the claim if they have provided proper training and equipment to the staff doing the cleanup. The goal of risk is to minimize risk to the city - through prompt response to claims and pro active training and equipping of city staff.

No questions for the CIB.