



## CITY OF SCOTTSDALE [MAY 5, 2026 CITY COUNCIL MEETING](#) SUMMARY

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**Navigation Note:** The title of this document links directly to the full video recording of the City of Scottsdale Council meeting. The time codes included throughout the highlights correspond to that video, allowing you to jump directly to specific segments of interest. Please note that these summaries were prepared using AI-assisted transcription to ensure timely reporting for our members.

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### **Overview of the Proposed FY 2026-27 Budget (22:33 - 48:41)**

During the introduction of the budget presentation, Budget Department Director Scott Saleen outlined the timeline for the budget's review and approval. The timeline milestones include:

- **April 3:** The proposed budget was officially released.
- **April:** The Budget Review Commission met three times to review the budget and generate their recommendations.
- **May 5 (Current Meeting):** The City Council held the proposed budget presentation and a work study session with the Budget Review Commission.
- **May 19:** The tentative budget adoption will be brought to the City Council.
- **June 9:** The final budget adoption is scheduled to take place.

The proposed FY 2026-27 budget for the City of Scottsdale totals \$2.118 billion, which is broken down into an \$838.2 million operating budget, \$882 million for Capital Improvements (CIP), and \$398 million in contingencies and reserves. **This represents an \$85 million (3.8%) reduction from the previously adopted budget.**

During his presentation (**25:37 - 35:20**), City Manager Greg Caton detailed a structural review implemented to create capacity for strategic investments. This included a 10% line-item reduction goal across departments and eliminating 2% of vacant personnel positions, which successfully yielded nearly \$10 million in savings,

Key strategic investments include:

- **Public Safety:** A \$4.8 million allocation for additional sworn compensation for police and fire. Police Chief Joe LeDuc (55:15 - 1:00:57) noted that due to recent aggressive market adjustments, the police department will achieve zero vacancies in the officer ranks for the first time.
- **Infrastructure:** The budget designates \$45.9 million for road pavement improvements—a substantial increase from the historical \$15 million average to address deferred maintenance and improve the city's Pavement Condition Index.
- **Utilities:** A 4.5% water rate increase and 3.5% sewer rate increase are proposed to cover rising operational, maintenance, and chemical supply costs.

**Deferral of Major Water Projects (1:13:09 - 1:45:00)** A central policy debate emerged over the removal of the Advanced Purified Recycled Water (APRW) facility and the Bartlett Dam expansion from the active five-year CIP. Interim Water Resources Senior Director Thyra Ryden-Diaz (1:13:09 - 1:16:10) explained that in lieu of immediate capital funding, a \$100 million placeholder for "Water Source and Supply" has been inserted into the FY 2027-28 budget to allow flexibility for future water acquisitions,.

City Manager Caton (1:17:27 - 1:19:01) elaborated that the APRW project was pulled because initial cost estimates of \$15 million to \$20 million had surged past \$67 million. Due to evolving regulations from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), staff removed it from the CIP to avoid committing to unreliable "hard costs",.

Councilwoman Solange Whitehead (1:16:12 - 1:23:06) strongly criticized the deferral, arguing it violates the city's strategic plan to diversify its water portfolio. She warned that delaying these essential projects creates an illusion of cost savings while exposing ratepayers to future spikes when the Colorado River allocation cuts arrive.

Several residents provided **Public Comment on Water Infrastructure:**

- **Mark Renz (2:11:53 - 2:15:18):** Noted that Scottsdale receives over 70% of its water from the Colorado River and argued that halting investments in the APRW and Bartlett Dam is dangerously short-sighted during a water crisis.
- **Linda Milhaven (2:19:59 - 2:23:39):** Stated that past water investments prove that costs incurred today are much cheaper than costs delayed to the future. She urged the council to put the \$68 million APRW and \$25 million Bartlett Dam projects back into the CIP.
- **Raul Zubia (2:35:19 - 2:36:44):** Argued that delaying these projects sacrifices certainty and resilience for the community, and guarantees future construction will be significantly more expensive.
- **Betty Janik (3:44:20 - 3:48:22):** Displayed charts showing Lake Powell inflows at 22% of the 60-year average and advocated for APRW implementation, noting the Budget Review Commission's recommendation to restore the project once costs are solidified,,.

**66th Street Pedestrian Crosswalk (1:50:49 - 3:11:23)** The inclusion of a \$600,000 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB), or "Hawk" crosswalk, on Shea Boulevard generated intense debate. City Engineer Allison Timkew (1:50:49 - 1:53:48) conceded that a 2024 study showed pedestrian volumes were slightly below standard thresholds, but staff justified the project to prevent hazardous mid-block crossings across a high-speed arterial road.

Mayor Lisa Borowsky (2:45:00 - 2:49:12) criticized the project's sudden inclusion in the CIP as a lack of transparency and argued that standard PHBs on major arterials like Shea Boulevard present severe safety risks,,. She suggested a pedestrian-triggered traffic light instead.

Conversely, Vice Mayor Adam Kwasman (3:04:08 - 3:11:23) vehemently defended the crosswalk as an essential, life-saving infrastructure investment for neighborhood children.

### **Public Comment Proponents for the Crosswalk:**

- **Daniel Freedman (2:02:25 - 2:04:22):** Testified to the extreme difficulty of walking his children and their friends across the street on Saturdays to attend the local synagogue.
- **Dr. Ariella Freedman (2:04:36 - 2:07:48):** Recounted a traumatic near-miss when her elderly father and four-year-old daughter attempted to cross Shea Boulevard mid-block. She noted the existing 64th Street signal is not a viable solution for Sabbath-observant families.
- **Paris Blumenthal (2:08:02 - 2:10:32):** Argued that preventing an accident is far more cost-effective than dealing with the aftermath.
- **Dr. Benjamin Benson (2:10:49 - 2:11:36):** Requested the crosswalk to protect young families and pregnant mothers who struggle to cross quickly.
- **Gila Leski (2:23:54 - 2:26:03):** Encouraged skeptics to physically attempt crossing the six-lane thoroughfare to understand the severe danger pedestrians face.

### **Public Comment Opponents of the Crosswalk:**

- **Jason Alexander (2:15:27 - 2:18:06):** Contended the crosswalk is an unjustified "pet project" pushed by Vice Mayor Quasman that bypasses the 2024 traffic study. He heavily criticized Quasman for framing legitimate fiscal opposition as antisemitism.
- **Dan Ishac (2:26:14 - 2:30:25):** Objected on the grounds that it does not meet data thresholds, will heavily impede major east-west traffic for thousands of drivers, and acts as an unwarranted expense.
- **Yvonne Cahill (2:36:57 - 2:39:52):** Expressed concern that placing a PHB on a road rampant with speeders and red-light runners provides a false sense of security, proposing a bridge as a safer alternative