

# Budget in Brief

FY 25 - 26



Curious about where your tax dollars go and how your city is investing in the future? This guide provides an easy-to-understand snapshot of the City's financial priorities, from essential services to exciting community projects.

## Budget Highlights

*Did you know?*

**6.5900**

FY 25 - 26 Millage Rate

The City of Winter Haven's Millage Rate has not been raised since 2018 - it was actually lowered in 2022 and has not changed since.

A millage rate is the amount per \$1,000 of property value used to calculate local property taxes. If your City property taxes have increased in the last six years, it is because your property value has increased.

**\$250,000**

Allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which includes a Residential Infill Affordable Housing Program.

**\$295,000**

Funding to Heart 4 Winter Haven's Housing Partnership of Winter Haven Program.

**\$423,992**

Of State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) FY26 revenue to create & preserve affordable housing.

**\$704,761**

Awarded in Grant & Aid to local Not-for-Profit Organizations dedicated to serving Winter Haven residents.

**\$293,825**

Funding for the Winter Haven Area Transit mass transit bus system.

**\$55.3 million**

In Current Year Capital Investments

**\$16.80/hr**

Minimum starting hourly wage for new hires.

**+6%**

Incumbent Market Rate Pay Adjustment

**+2.5%**

Step Plan Wage Increase on Employees' Anniversary.

**\$25.2 million**

In General Fund Available Fund Balance



2025 City Commission

*Did you know?*

Winter Haven maintains a 30% General Fund Balance.

The fund balance gives us financial stability, ensuring we can maintain services in tough times without borrowing more or raising taxes.

*Questions?*

The Financial Services team would be happy to help! 863.291.5667

**WINTER HAVEN**

THE CHAIN OF LAKES CITY

(Left to Right) Brian Yates, Mayor Pro Tem; Clifton E. Dollison, Commissioner; L. Tracy Mercer, Commissioner; Bradley T. Dantzler, Commissioner; Nathaniel J. Birdsong, Jr., Mayor

# Dedicated Funds

All dollar amount numbers indicated are in the millions. Amounts are fund expenditures for FY25/26.

## At A Glance

**\$251.9 mil**  
Total Budget

**\$46.1 mil. less**  
than FY24/25

**60,000+**  
Population

**42+**  
Square Miles

**50**  
Lakes

**55**  
Miles of  
Shoreline

**479**  
Acres of  
Parks

**134**  
Miles of  
Roads

**766**  
Total  
Employees

## Special Revenue Funds

Funds designated for specific purposes, typically funded by restricted revenue sources such as grants, taxes, or fees.



Libraries  
\$ 2.7



S.H.I.P.  
\$ 0.4



Airport  
\$ 4.7



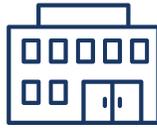
CRAs  
\$ 9.0



Cemeteries  
\$ 1.0



Impact Fees  
\$ 1.8



Federal Building  
\$ 0.2



Building & Permitting  
\$ 3.7



Affordable Housing  
\$ 0.3



Urban Forestry  
\$ 0.1

## Construction Funds

Funds used for construction and infrastructure projects, primarily funded by grants, bonds or designated tax revenues.



Transportation  
\$ 9.3



Capital Projects  
\$ 10.5

## Proprietary Funds

Funds supporting City services that generate revenue through user fees or charges.



Water Utility  
\$ 92.6



Dark Fiber Enterprise  
\$ 0.6



Stormwater Utility  
\$ 5.5



Solid Waste  
\$ 13.4



Willowbrook Golf Course  
\$ 1.4

## Internal Services Funds

Funds for services provided internally between City departments, funded by internal charges to the departments.



Internal Services  
\$ 10.2



Fleet Management  
\$ 4.9

# General Fund

## Where do your property taxes go?

Sample distribution from a real Winter Haven resident in 2025.\*\*



- 35%** Polk County BOCC
- 34%** City of Winter Haven
- 28%** Polk County Public Schools
- 2%** Lake Region Lakes Management District\*
- 1%** Southwest Florida Water Management District

Ad Valorem Revenue (also known as Property Taxes) is applied as revenue within the General Fund.

\* Not all Winter Haven residents are inside the LRLM District.  
\*\* Does not include any CDD assessment.



**Special Revenue Funds**  
\$23.9

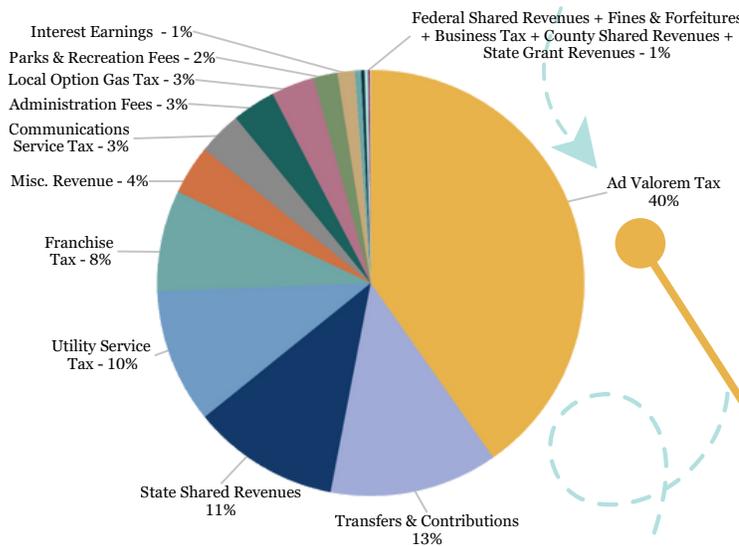
**General Fund**  
\$79.6

**Construction Funds**  
\$19.8

**Proprietary Funds**  
\$113.5

**Internal Services**  
\$15.1

## Where do the General Fund Revenues Come From?



*Did you know?*

**Winter Haven's top priority is ensuring a safe community.**

Our financial investment in Public Safety alone is greater than the revenues generated through property taxes.

Revenue from Property Taxes: \$ 31.5 m  
Investment in Public Safety: \$ 34.7 m

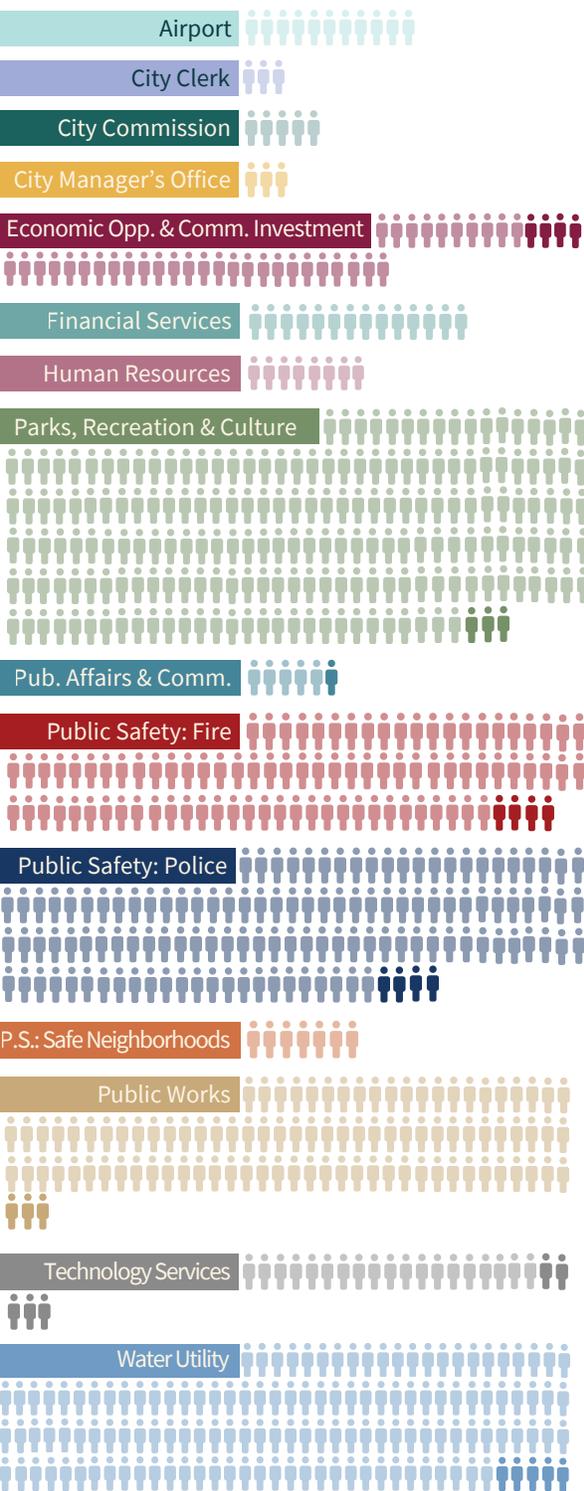
## Where do the General Fund Expenditures Go?

All dollar amount numbers indicated are in the millions.

Public Safety		Parks, Recreation & Culture	
Police	\$18.5	Parks & Grounds	\$ 4.1
Safe Neighborhoods	\$ 0.9	Parks & Recreation Administration	\$ 1.4
Fire	\$15.4	Aquatics	\$ 0.8
<b>Infrastructure Management</b>		Senior Adult Center	\$ 0.3
Streets	\$ 3.8	Fieldhouse & Conference Center	\$ 2.2
<b>Administrative &amp; Government</b>		Tennis Center	\$ 0.3
City Commission	\$ 0.2	W.H. Recreation & Cultural Center	\$ 1.0
City Clerk	\$ 0.5	Leisure Park Rentals	\$ 0.2
City Manager's Office / Grant & Aid	\$ 1.2	Activity Fields	\$ 2.6
Finance	\$ 1.6	Ritz Theatre	\$ 0.03
Legal	\$ 0.5	Nora Mayo Hall	\$ 0.6
Public Affairs & Communication	\$ 0.7	<b>Growth Management</b>	
		Planning	\$ 1.0

# Employees by Department

**653 Full-Time | 113 Part-Time**  
Brighter Color = New Position in FY 25 - 26.



# Major Investments

## One Water Master Plan

The ultimate goal of the One Water Master Plan is to construct a series of natural water storage facilities throughout the local watershed that would create water supply, prevent flooding, improve water quality, protect lakes and provide recreation and scenic beauty. The City's mission is to align resources, policies and funding to achieve the One Water Vision working cooperatively with local and regional partners.

## Water Resource Facility

The existing Waste Water Treatment Plant #3 has reached the end of its useful life and needs extensive upgrades and renovations. The new facility will combine two wastewater treatment facilities into one and feature new technology and expanded capacity to meet current and projected 2045 wastewater flows.

## Public Safety Complex Five

This project located in the northwest section of Winter Haven is a complete design/build for an 11,000 square foot multi-use public service building. The new facility will enhance emergency response times and strengthen community safety and law enforcement presence in this area as it will serve as a permanent, safe, and secure station accommodating fire personnel across three shifts and also serve as a Winter Haven Police Department Substation.

## Chain of Lakes Phase 2

The Chain of Lakes Complex provides four new collegiate-level baseball fields, multipurpose areas, lakeshore perimeter loop trail system, and an access road and parking facilities. By attracting over 30 annual baseball events, including the nationally recognized RussMatt Collegiate Invitational, the park will draw more than 25,000 visitors and generate an estimated \$19 million in local economic impact. Phase 2 of the project will add 230 paved parking spaces and 120 stabilized grass parking spaces for a total of 350 additional parking spaces at the complex. With these additional spaces, the total parking spaces for the complex will be approximately 1,450 spaces.

## DiamondPlex Renovation

The DiamondPlex originally opened in 1998. The softball complex features five lighted fields, a central concession/multipurpose building, picnic areas, playground and fan amenities. The Complex hosts the Polk State College Lady Eagles Softball team, recreation and senior leagues, travel softball tournaments and a six-week collegiate spring break tournament each year. The renovation project is geared towards converting the field lighting to modern LED lights, fence upgrades & replacement, field upgrades, building upgrades and the addition of amenities such as batting cages and bull pens.

## T-Hangar Taxilanes Rehabilitation

The existing taxilanes between T-hangar buildings that are located in the south quadrant of the airport have a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) as poor in accordance with the FDOT PCI Index Ratings. This project will include a mill and overlay of the asphalt pavement and replacement of markings. Grant funding will be provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration

*Want to Know More?*

**You can view our full Budget online!**

Use your phone to scan the QR code to access the budget book, or visit [bit.ly/CHWFY26Budget](http://bit.ly/CHWFY26Budget).



**Where Local Meets Innovation,  
the Extraordinary Happens.**

**MYWINTERHAVEN.COM**