

Mayor Brown's 2025 Budget Message

Over the past few months, the Chief Administrative Officer, Finance team, and Department Heads have been working diligently to draft a budget that reflects the vision I have articulated for Upper Darby Township government operations. That vision—as does what the final proposed budget will reflect—recognizes the fiduciary responsibility of elected and appointed officials that lead this organization and supports realistic and adequate funding for the pillars of our public service responsibility:

- Public health and safety of the community—the prime directive of all local governments. The budget seeks to provide both personnel, equipment, and training to ensure Upper Darby residents are served and well protected;
- Meaningful, realistic, and necessary investment into Township infrastructure—to ensure that we are living up to our responsibility to provide safe roads, reliable sewer and sanitation operations, updated parks equipment, and recreation activities, and modernized facilities, among other things;
- Capital investment in the vehicles and equipment that allow up to more effectively deliver services to residents;
- Wages and benefits to staff and third-party personnel that strike a balance between both fairness to our personnel and respect of the impact to Upper Darby Township taxpayers;
- Investment in technology and staff development to increase our efficiency, reduce our costs, and bring a focus on innovation to Upper Darby Township operations;
- Investing in economic development to enhance our stability by creating jobs, increasing revenue, and fostering community resilience, which leads to a stronger, more vibrant economy;
- Establishing a process to ensure a strong fund balance—something that is also essential for our sustainability, as it provides a financial cushion for emergencies, supports consistent service delivery, and enhances creditworthiness, fostering long-term fiscal stability.

Last week, we provided two nights of presentations by the CAO and leadership team to be more transparent to both the Council and community about the operations of your government and what it takes to make it work. We have also sought from the Township Council both your input on those operations; but, more importantly, the Council's strategic priorities to work collaboratively to align those with mine—thank you to all Councilmembers who have committed to submitting your priorities to the CAO. After all, while it is the duty of the mayor to present the budget, the Council has a corresponding duty to adopt one. I see it in the best interest of the entire community that we be collaborative in making sure the final, adopted budget realistically address both the short-and long-term viability of our community.

Finally, in our first draft of the budget presented last week we projected 2025 revenues totaling \$99,032,083 and expenditures totaling \$95,969,378. This first draft yields a projected fund balance of \$3,062,705. As we continue to do our due diligence in preparing the budget, it is our expectation that these numbers will change and that the fund balance will increase. Three things are important to note about these last statements:

1. This financial position and projections are based on the passage of the 1% Earned Income Tax (EIT);
2. As the CAO offered during our meetings last week, a projected fund balance offers Upper Darby new opportunities for discussions about the use of fund balance:
 - a. Discussion about a formal fund balance policy to get us to 20% of the current year budget;
 - b. Discussion about the pursuit of a new credit/bond rating to enhance our opportunities for a meaningful, long-term capital improvement plan;
 - c. Discussion about the Mayor and Council's priorities for a 5-year capital plan; and
 - d. Discussions about the potential off-set of property taxes due to EIT funding; and

3. With the implementation of the EIT, our discussions do not need to include consideration of a millage increase and a continued practice of ignoring the real capital and operating needs of the city.

I look forward to continuing our budget deliberations and successfully delivering a realistic 2025 budget.

Respectfully,



Edward Brown
Mayor

