

To: Mayor Kerry Thomson
From: Bloomington Common Council
Date: April 1, 2026
RE: Budget Priorities 2027

As you know, Council has been discussing budget priorities through the lens of outcomes and the 7 priority buckets identified in partnership with the administration. This memo serves as a summary and ranking of our budget priorities for 2027 and requests for budget presentations in light of these priorities.

First, as a body, implementation of existing plans rose to the top of our collective conversations. Existing plans have gone through multiple rounds of community input and vetting, thus implementation of those plans is of high importance for council and for the community as a whole. These plans served as guiding principles through our discussions and our original list of outcomes came directly from these plans. These include the [Comprehensive Plan](#), [Safe Streets for All Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#), and [Transportation Plan](#). Related is interest in development of plans where none currently exist, specifically noting a Public Safety Plan.

Second, a list of priority outcomes were identified and ranked. Deputy Mayor Knapp indicated that our final list of priorities did not need to be separated by priority buckets. A combined process that included in-person discussion and follow up surveying narrowed down our original list of outcomes to those of highest priority and then a final exercise required each councilmember to prioritize their list by assigning points to each outcome. This is the final ranked list of 2027 budget priorities based on the consolidation of [council member prioritization](#).

1. Maintenance and enhancement of city assets
 - a. Basic maintenance and upkeep (filling potholes, repaving, etc.)
 - b. Design improvements to improve access, service to community, safety, etc.
2. Making homelessness brief, rare, and nonrepeating
 - a. Increased access to mental healthcare
 - b. Increased access to addiction treatment programs
 - c. Support of early intervention services (like eviction prevention and job support)
 - d. Job and wage growth
 - e. Coordination of support services
 - f. Increased range of affordable housing types
3. Zero traffic fatalities or serious injuries by 2039
 - a. Pedestrian network is cleared quickly and effectively after snowfall
 - b. Transportation network enhancements support all travel modes for people of all ages, abilities and modes of transportation
4. Increase housing diversity within neighborhoods
 - a. Increase predictability for permitting
 - b. Decrease permitting wait times

- c. Increase range of affordable housing options, including those with Universal Design and/or are environmentally sustainable
- 5. Address and Reduce systemic inequities
 - a. Programs to reduce income inequality across and between ages, races, and genders
 - b. Ensure engagement processes are inclusive and representative
 - c. Reduce race and class disparities in policing, justice, and public safety systems
 - **Note: these can look like goals related to systems (like CBU bill discounts/assistance), systematic approaches to government procedures, defining equity, and measuring who is engaging and in what contexts.
- 6. Inclusive and strong local economy, able to stay resilient and adaptable
 - a. Wages, jobs, and GDP outpace population growth
 - b. An increased number of employees who work in Bloomington are able to live in Bloomington
- 7. Expansion of options other than uniformed police officers for non-violent offenses
- 8. Strengthen food security networks
 - a. A local food culture is promoted and protected
- 9. Air quality is maintained at a high level and carbon emissions are reduced
 - a. Fossil fuel consumption is reduced community wide
 - b. Increased renewable energy production
- 10. Create vibrant 3rd places/neighborhood hubs
 - a. Activate vacant spaces
 - b. Invest in ensuring public spaces are high quality, engaging, and active
- 11. Waste reduction
 - a. Increased composting

We recognize there may be many methods of meeting the above priorities, they could each fall into more than one of our Outcome Based Budgeting categories or “buckets”, and may include multiple departments and city staff. Additionally, we realize that these priorities require different levels of investment and approaches, including policy updates, support of community partners, programs, and legislative change.

Third, as part of budget presentations, we are interested in hearing how certain programs and expenses are supporting these priority outcomes and splitting those expenses out to the greatest extent possible, including considering direct expenses, dedicated staff time, and if the expense falls into more than one priority area. Additionally, in recognition that some of these priority outcomes will take multiple budget cycles we are interested in department goals related to these priorities for the budget year being discussed. For example, the maintenance of city assets would include filling potholes, which requires direct expenses for materials and also staff time. An intersection redesign to enhance safety may include materials, staff time, and design work and may be considered enhancement of a city asset and also work toward our goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2039.

Thank you for considering these priorities when planning the 2027 budget and presentations. If you are interested in reviewing the public discussions or source materials related to the overall council conversation, full list of suggested priorities, or how the ranked list was created, you can review meetings and materials from full council meetings on December 10, 2025 and March 11, 2026 and Fiscal Committee meetings on February 13, 2026 and February 27, 2026. Please let us know if you have questions or seek further clarification on these priorities.

DRAFT