



# CITY OF IONIA

## *Residents Guide to the City of Ionia's Finances*

### *October 1, 2019*

#### Introduction

This Residents Guide to the City of Ionia's Finances represents the seventh of such guides published by the City of Ionia in order to fulfill one of the requirements established by the City, Village, and Township Revenue Sharing (CVTRS) program [formerly known as the Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP)].

The format for this year's guide is consistent with the format implemented by the City in preparing the seven previous guides (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 editions).

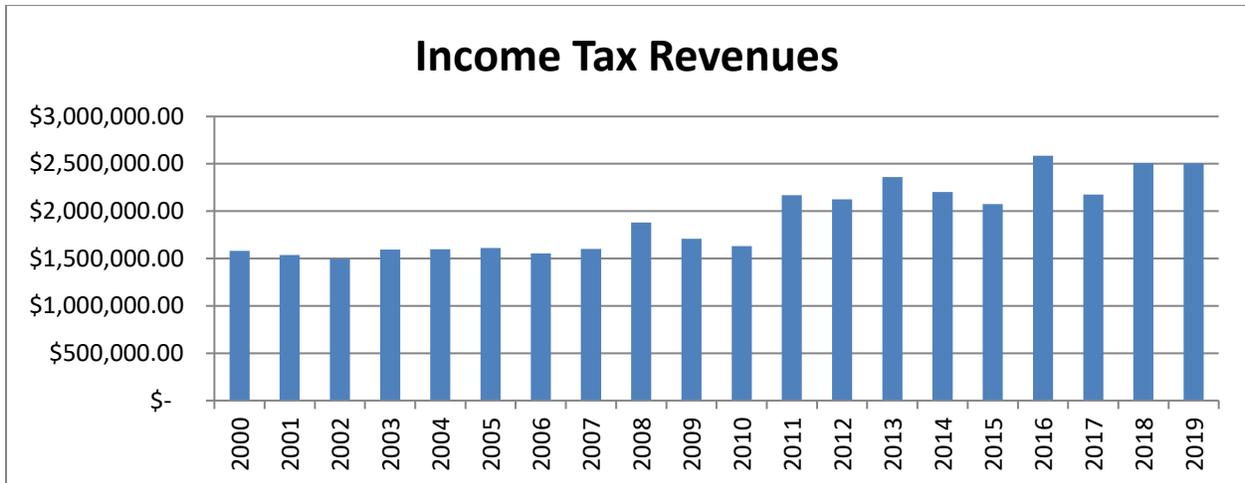
Again this year, in conjunction with the publishing of this guide, the City has also prepared a companion comprehensive budget report including the current fiscal year's (FY19-20) revenues and expenditures along with projected revenues and expenditures for FY20-21. This additional report, along with the City's performance dashboard and a complete listing of outstanding debt and associated debt amortization schedules, is available on the City's website at [www.cityofionia.org](http://www.cityofionia.org).

#### Revenues Received by the City

##### **General Operations**

The majority of the City's core operations are funded by the City's General Fund. This includes general government operations, public safety, information technology and transfers to other City operating funds including parks, recreation and streets. For the City there are three primary sources of revenue that support the General Fund – the city income tax, property tax and revenue sharing.

The City began levying a city income tax in 1994. The income tax rate is statutorily set at 1.0% for residents and .5% for non-residents. These rates are applied to individuals and businesses either residing in the City or earning income in the City. Since enactment the city income tax has been the largest source of revenue for the City's General Fund and generated \$2.506 million during FY18-19. The bar graph below illustrates the total income tax revenues received by the City for each fiscal year since FY 00-01.

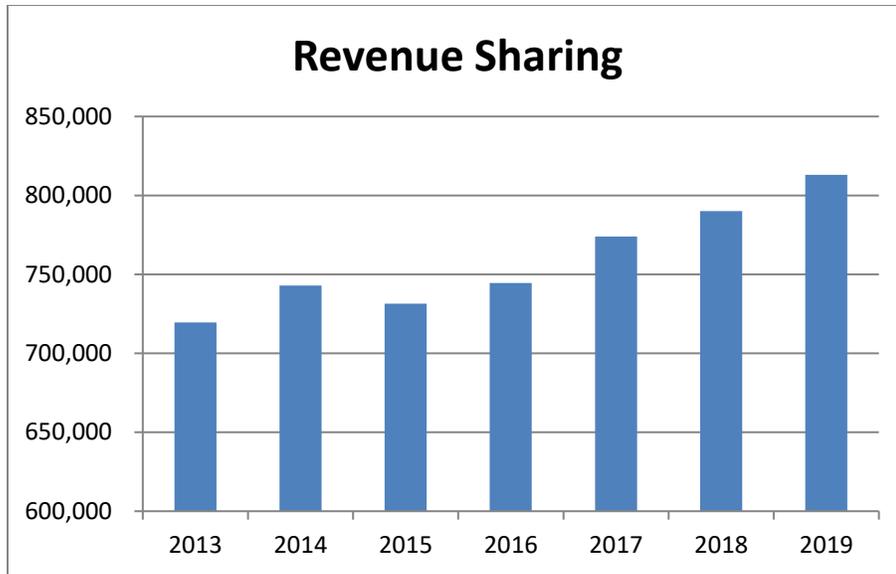


The second largest source of revenue for the General Fund has alternated between property tax and revenue sharing depending on the total millage rate levied by the City and the condition of the State of Michigan budget.

The City Charter sets the annual maximum millage rate at 15.00 mills plus 1.00 mill for library operations and .75 mills for public transportation. The millage reduction factor established by the Headlee Amendment does affect some of the millages levied by the City. As part of the annual budget process the City Council sets the millage to be levied by the City and determines which millages are levied as part of the summer (July) property tax bill or winter (December) bill. The chart below illustrates the total millage rate levied by the City (in “mills” – a “mill” is \$1.00 per \$1,000 in property taxable value) to support the past five fiscal year budgets. The chart also identifies the actual revenue that was generated by each millage during FY18-19.

	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	Revenue in FY19
General operating	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	\$ 292,828
Public Safety	0.5000	0.5000	0.7500	1.0000	1.0000	\$ 96,087
Solid Waste	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	\$ 192,183
Environmental Respons	0.6500	0.6500	0.4000	0.2508	0.2508	\$ 9,732
Environmental Debt	0.9000	0.9000	0.9000	0.0000	0.0000	\$ -
Dial A Ride	0.7492	0.7492	0.7492	0.7492	0.7492	\$ 71,983
City Streets	1.2500	1.2500	1.2500	1.0000	1.0000	\$ 96,087
Parks - Facilities Imp	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	\$ 96,087
	10.0492	10.0492	10.0492	9.0000	9.0000	\$ 854,987

Revenue Sharing is distributed by the State of Michigan to cities, townships, villages and some counties based on a formula that takes into consideration population, relative tax effort and sales tax revenues received by the State (a full explanation is available on the State of Michigan, Department of Treasury website). For the City, revenue sharing has been the most volatile revenue source during the past several fiscal years due to the economic pressures and financial challenges faced by the State of Michigan. The bar graph below illustrates total revenue sharing dollars received by the City during the past six fiscal years.

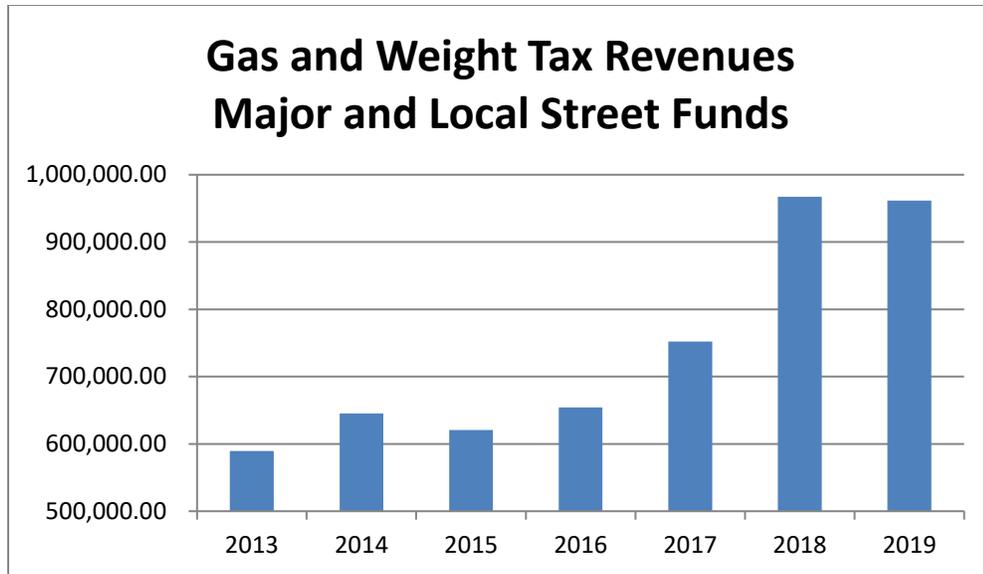


In addition to the “big three” revenue (income tax, property tax, revenue sharing), the City’s General Fund also receives other revenues in addition to the sources identified above. Some of these other revenues include fire protection grants (payment from the State of Michigan for providing fire services/coverage to the prisons), franchise fees (Charter), fines, administrative support service charges to other City funds and interest income.

### Street Operations

The City owns and maintains 26.51 miles of public streets. Each street is classified by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) as either a major street or a local street and the City’s annual street mileage is certified by MDOT for the purpose of determining the amount of Gas and Weight Tax that will be distributed to the City to maintain its streets. A major street is a street that typically has a higher traffic volume than most streets and usually serves a center of commerce. In some instances a street is considered a major street due to it providing a linkage between two State highways. In the case of the City, there are 8.66 miles of major streets in the City with the list including Main, Depot, Steele, Washington and Yeomans Streets. All streets not categorized as being a major street are a local street. These are typically neighborhood streets. The City has 17.85 miles of local streets including Chapman, Branch, Brooks and Pearl Streets.

Everyone who owns and operates a vehicle pays gas and weight taxes. This particular tax, collected by the State, includes vehicle registration fees, surcharges on gasoline and fuel (paid at the pump) and driver license fees. The bar graph below illustrates the amount of Gas and Weight Tax paid to the City to operate its street system during the past six fiscal years. Due to changes in driving practices due to higher gas prices, this particular revenue source has fluctuated. In order to close the gap between the revenues received from this source and the cost of maintaining both street systems, the City typically transfers dollars from the General Fund to each street fund (especially the Local Street Fund). During 2018, Ionia County voters approved a County-wide road millage. The City annually receives a pro-rata share of the revenue generated by this millage.



The City is annually required to file with MDOT an Act 51 report which illustrates how the City has spent its Gas and Weight Tax revenues and to ensure that its spending practices are consistent with MDOT policies.

#### **Utilities – Water and Sewer**

The City operates both a public water and public sanitary sewer system. In addition to these systems servicing the City, portions of neighboring townships are serviced by one or both of these utilities. To account for the revenues generated and expenditures incurred by each utility, the City maintains separate Water and Sewer Funds. Unlike many government funds, both the Water Fund and Sewer Fund are proprietary in nature meaning that they are intended to operate as an enterprise which is funded by fees sufficient to cover the costs of operation (no property tax dollars support utility operations).

The Water Fund accounts for all aspects of operating the water utility including maintaining the City’s well field and pumps, storing the water and pressurizing the water system (through ground or elevated storage), distributing the water, reading and maintaining meters, and ensuring its quality. Revenues to cover the cost of providing residents and businesses with quality drinking water are generated through the sale of water. Customers are billed quarterly for the water used during the previous three months (commodity charge). In addition to the commodity charge, the City also charges a facilities maintenance charge which is intended to cover the cost of retiring the principal and interest on bonds (loans) issued for the purpose of upgrading the water system. The facilities maintenance charge utilizes a residential equivalent unit factor to determine the charge assessed non-single family residential and commercial accounts. The table below illustrates the commodity and facilities maintenance charge rates as set by the City Council for the past five fiscal years.

**Utility Rates – Water Fund**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Water Commodity Charge (per 1,000 gallons)	\$ 2.55	\$ 2.70	\$ 2.80	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.40
Water Facilities Maintenance (per REU)	\$ 20.75	\$ 21.50	\$ 23.00	\$ 24.00	\$ 26.00

Based on the rate schedule identified above, each rate generated the total revenues identified below, by category, for the past five fiscal years.

**Revenue Generated – Water Fund (in hundred thousand)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Water Commodity Charge	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,558	\$ 1,513	\$1,718
Water Facilities Maintenance	\$ 413	\$ 430	\$ 442	\$ 468	\$ 516

The Sewer Fund accounts for all aspects of operating the sanitary sewer utility including collecting the sewage through the collection system and treating it at the Ionia Regional Utilities Authority Wastewater Treatment Plant. Like the Water Fund, revenues to cover the cost of providing the services are generated through assessing both a commodity charge and a facilities maintenance charge. The amount billed for sanitary sewer services is typically based on the water meter reading for the same quarter. The table below illustrates the commodity and facilities maintenance charge rates for the sewer system as set by the City Council for the past five fiscal years.

**Utility Rates – Sewer Fund**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Sewer Commodity Charge (per 1,000 gallons)	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00
Sewer Facilities Maintenance (per REU)	\$ 43.00	\$ 43.00	\$ 43.50	\$ 44.00	\$ 44.00

Based on the rate table identified above, each rate generated the total revenues identified below, by category, for the past five fiscal years.

**Revenue Generated – Sewer Fund (in hundred thousand)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sewer Commodity Charge	\$ 2,997	\$ 2,772	\$ 2,648	\$ 2,769	\$2,644
Sewer Facilities Maintenance	\$ 877	\$ 893	\$ 921	\$ 927	\$ 940

## **Other Sources**

In addition to the major operating funds identified above, the City maintains several other funds to financially account for its operations. This list of funds includes the following which generate revenue from specific sources to support the particular services financed by each fund:

Capital Improvement Fund: Revenues received in the form of transfers from the City's Water Fund and Sewer Fund (usually from bond proceeds).

Central Garage Fund: Revenues generated through the leasing of equipment owned by this Fund on a pay for use basis by other City Funds.

Dial-A-Ride Fund: Revenues generated through a .7492 mill property tax levy, federal and state grants and fare box revenue from riders.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Fund: Revenues generated through a 2 mill property tax levy on all properties located within the DDA District and a tax increment finance (TIF) district which generates revenues by capturing certain millages on increases in property values in the district.

Environmental Fund: Revenues generated through a property tax millage (.1008 mill) designated for assisting in the cost of remediating the City's former municipal landfill on Cleveland Street.

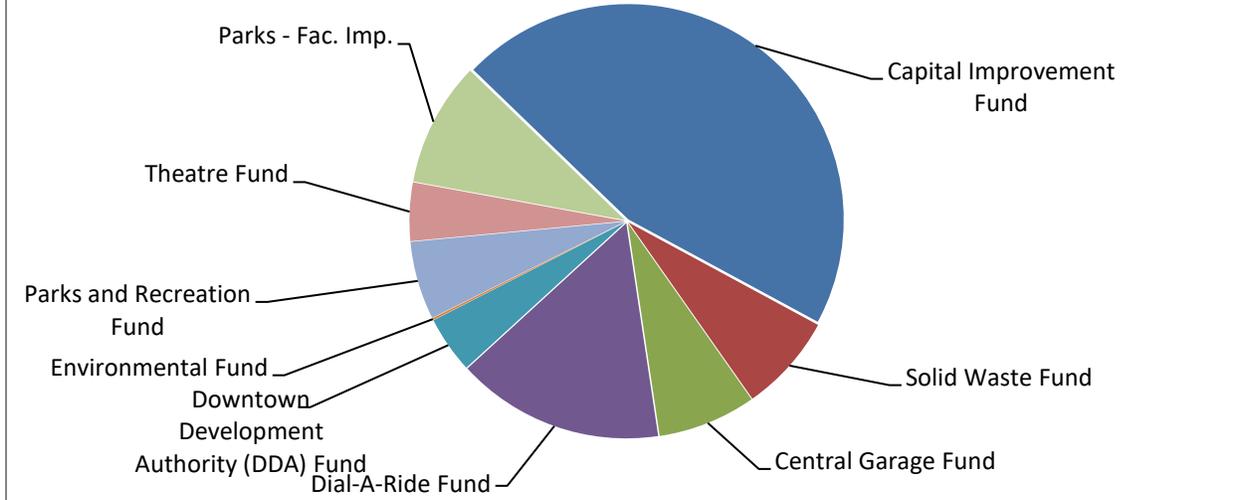
Parks and Recreation Fund: Revenues generated through program participation fees, sponsorships and a transfer from the City's General Fund.

Solid Waste Fund: Revenues generated through a 2.00 mill property tax levy and service charges for the provision of trash and recycling services.

Theatre Fund: Revenues generated through movie admissions and sale of concessions.

The pie chart below shows the sources of all revenues received collectively by the eight funds identified above during FY19-20.

## Revenues from Other Funds FY 2019



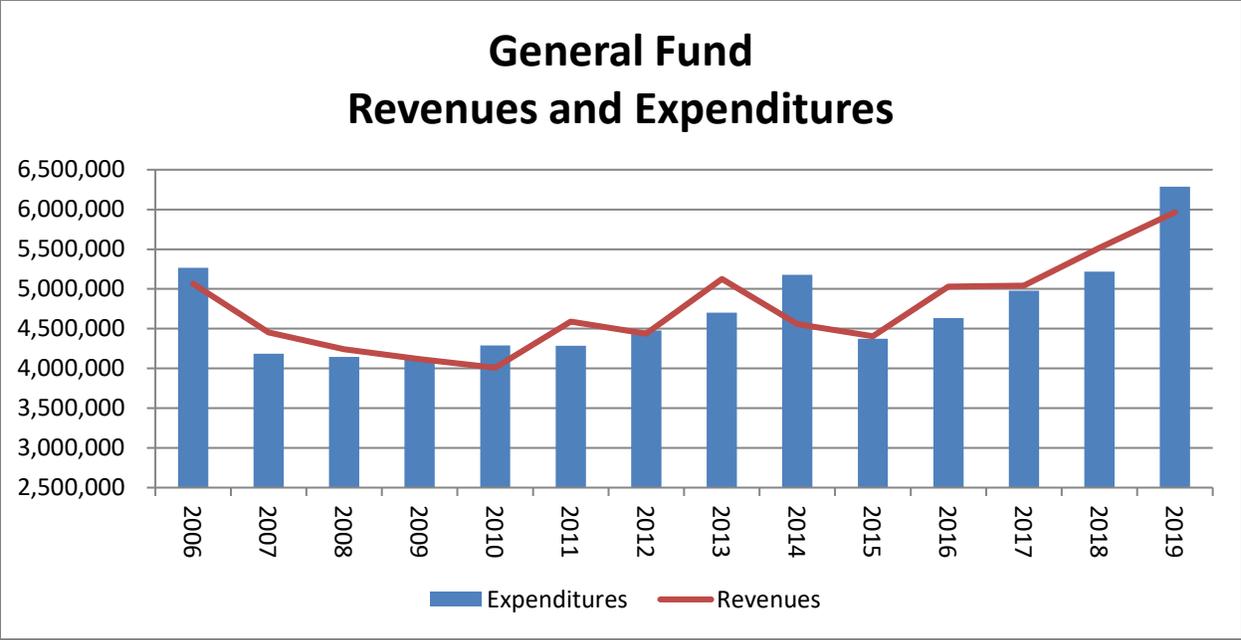
### Services Delivered by the City

#### **General Operations**

Most general government operations are funded by the City's General Fund either directly (budgeted in the General Fund) or indirectly (budgeted in a different fund which receives an appropriation from the General Fund). Departments and offices funded by the General Fund include the following:

City Council	City Manager	Elections	Accounting
Audit	Income Tax Administration	Planning & Zoning	Assessing
City Attorney	Information Technology	Ambulance	Public Safety
Street Lights	Contributions to Other Funds (Streets, Parks & Recreation, Debt)		

Total expenditures in the General Fund fluctuate from fiscal year to fiscal year for a variety of reasons including changes in revenue, changes in staffing levels, capital projects (ie. facility improvements, vehicle replacement, etc.) and service delivery adjustments. The graph below illustrates total General Fund expenditures for the past sixteen fiscal years. The line on the graph shows total General Fund revenues for the corresponding fiscal year. In instances where the line is above the bar, revenues received by the General Fund exceeded General Fund expenditures. Conversely, in instances where the line is below the bar, General Fund expenditures exceeded revenues and reserves (fund balance) held by the General Fund were tapped to make-up the difference.

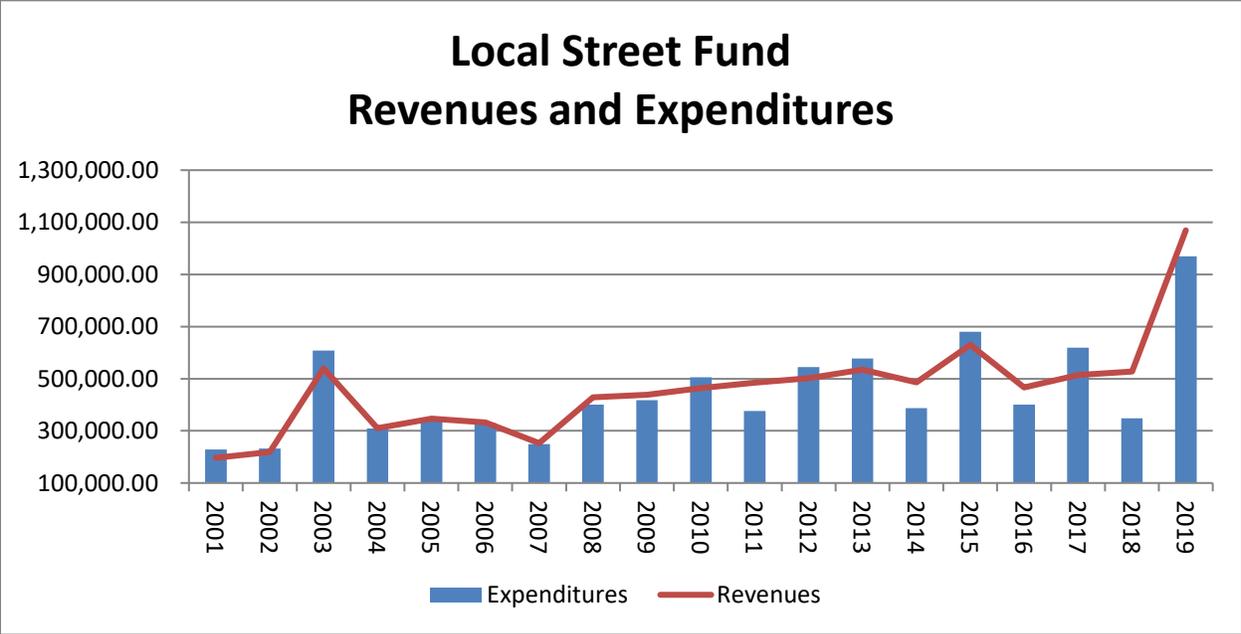
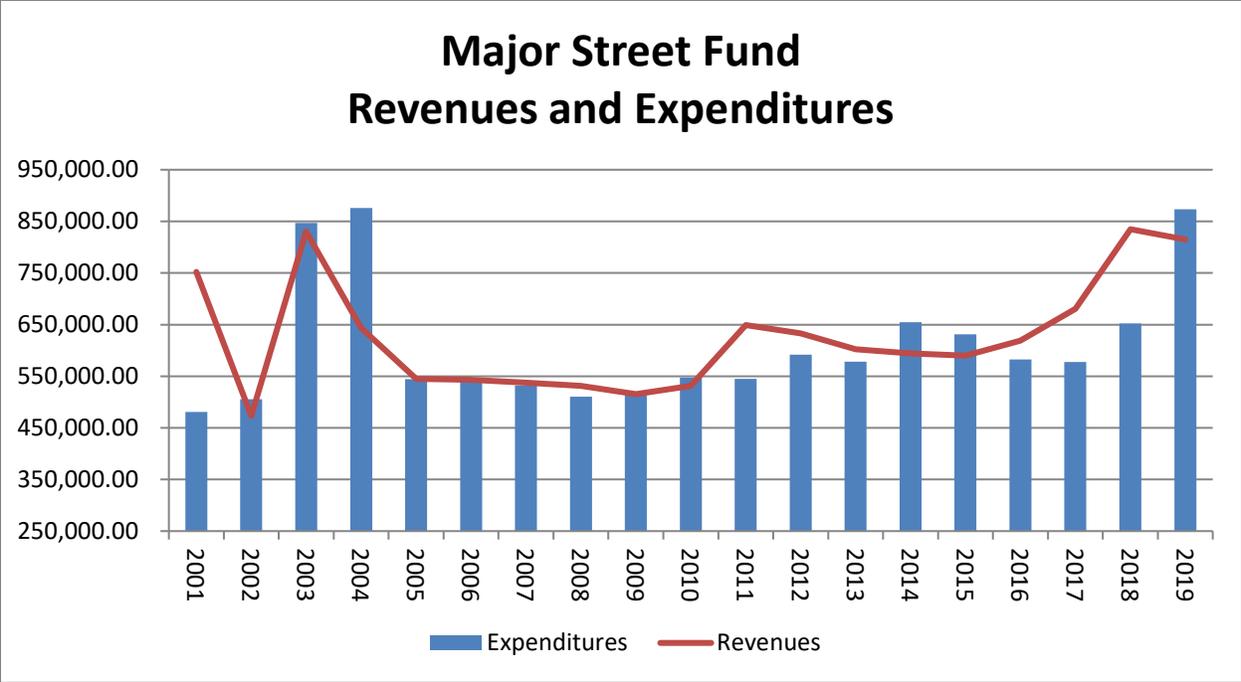


**Street Operations**

As explained above revenues and expenditures associated with the operation of the City’s street system are segregated by law in either the Major Street Fund or the Local Street Fund. Both funds include line items addressing general street maintenance including routine maintenance, tree trimming, traffic service, winter maintenance and administration. The Major Street Fund also includes a line item where some downtown maintenance related expenses are charged. The majority of these expenses are covered by a transfer from the City’s Downtown Development Authority Fund.

The City annually reports its street maintenance related expenses to the State of Michigan so that the State can monitor the appropriateness of the City’s use of State transferred Gas and Weight Taxes. Expenditures in both the Major Street Fund and Local Street Fund fluctuate greatly from year to year due to two primary reasons – the level of street maintenance work completed (resurfacing and reconstructs) and the severity of winter weather and the associated snow removal and salting expenses.

The graphs below illustrate the total expenditures for the Major Street Fund and Local Street fund, respectively, for the past sixteen fiscal years. As with the graphs that illustrate General Fund expenditures, included on the graphs below are lines which illustrate revenues for each fiscal year. In instances where expenditures exceed revenues, fund reserves were tapped to cover the difference. This is quite common with the two street funds considering that the City will “save” money for a fiscal year or two in order to cover the significant cost of reconstructing a particular street. Street improvement priorities are established through capital planning and incorporated into the annual fiscal year budget as part of the City’s Capital Improvement Plan. The City Council reviews this Plan on an annual basis and makes adjustments as necessary.

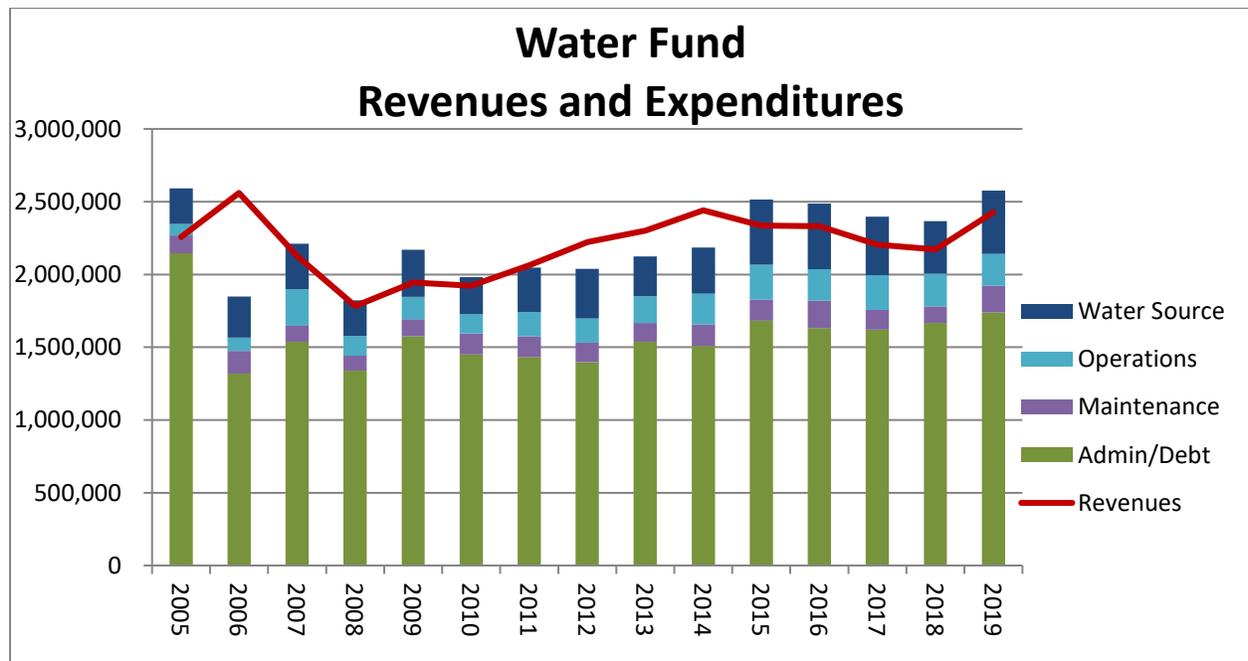


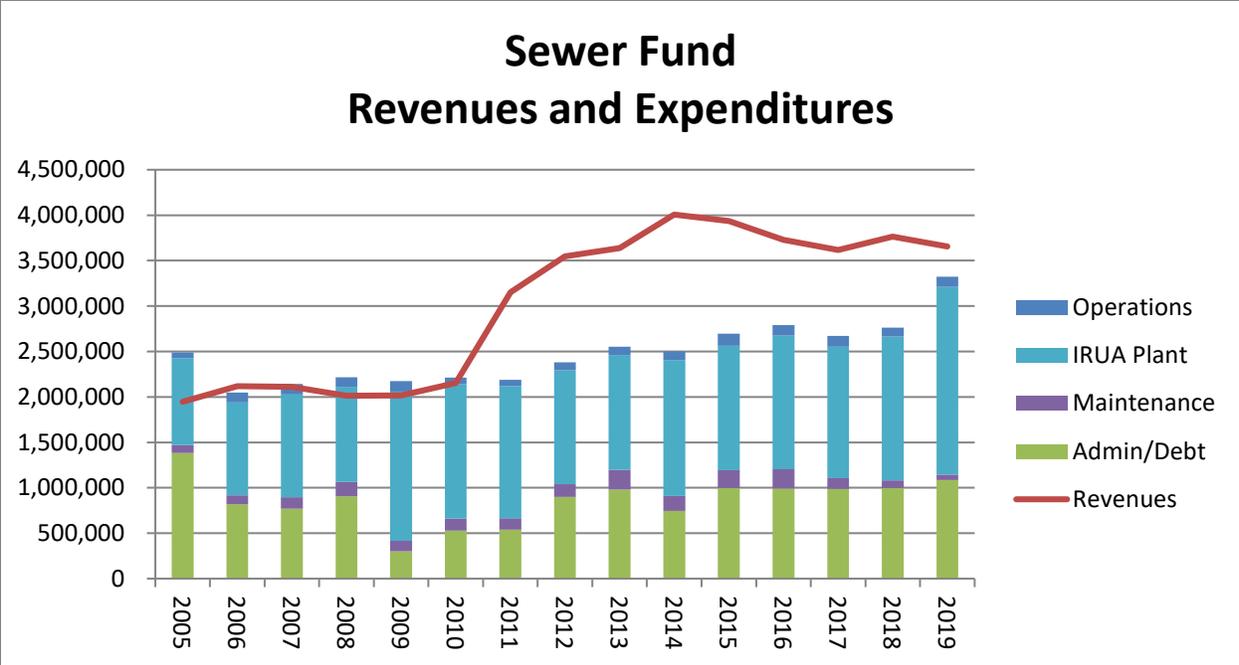
**Utilities – Water and Sewer**

Expenditures in both the Water Fund and Sewer Fund are scrutinized closely each year as part of the annual fiscal year budgeting process as the rate structure for each utility is developed. As with any utility there are high fixed costs of operating both the water and sanitary sewer systems. As water consumption increases (or total gallons of wastewater treated increases) the cost of producing (or treating) each gallon is typically less than the cost of producing (or treating) the previous gallon.

Water Fund expenditures can fluctuate greatly based on the cost of routine maintenance/capital improvement projects that are undertaken. The City attempts to “smooth” these expenses from fiscal year to fiscal year through forecasting major expenditures over a five fiscal year period. Such forecasting assists in developing a more stable rate structure. Expenditures in the Water Fund are annually appropriated by cost center which are administration/debt service, operations, water source and maintenance. Expenditures for each cost center for the past sixteen fiscal years are identified in the bar graph below labeled “Water Fund Revenues and Expenditures”. Revenues received each fiscal year to offset the expenditures are illustrated by the line on the graph.

Sewer Fund expenditures are also annually appropriated by cost center which are administration/debt service, operations, treatment plant and maintenance. The largest expenditure represents a payment to the Ionia Regional Utilities Authority (IRUA) for the City’s portion of operating the treatment plant. The City pays IRUA based on a formula which includes the flow of wastewater sent to the treatment plant from City sewer customers relative to the total flow from all participants. Expenditures for each cost center for the past seventeen fiscal years are identified in the bar graph below labeled “Sewer Fund Revenues and Expenditures”. Revenues received each fiscal year to offset the expenditures are illustrated by the line on the graph below.

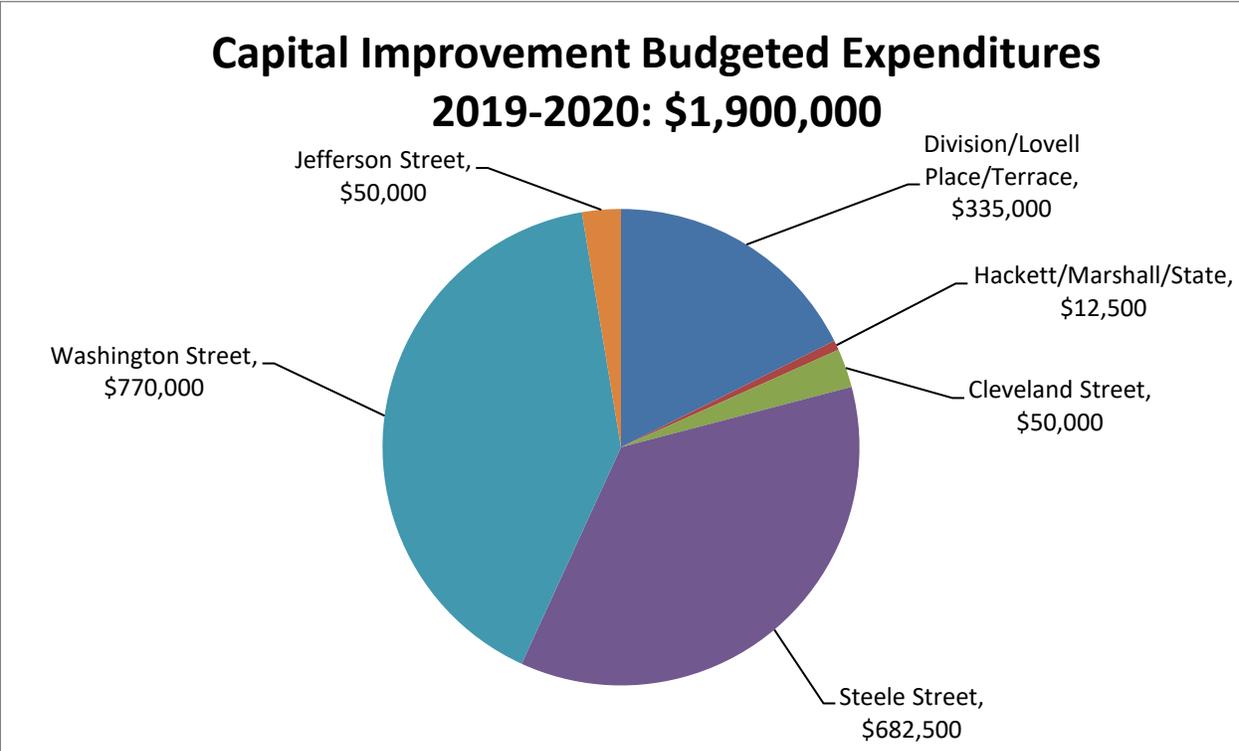




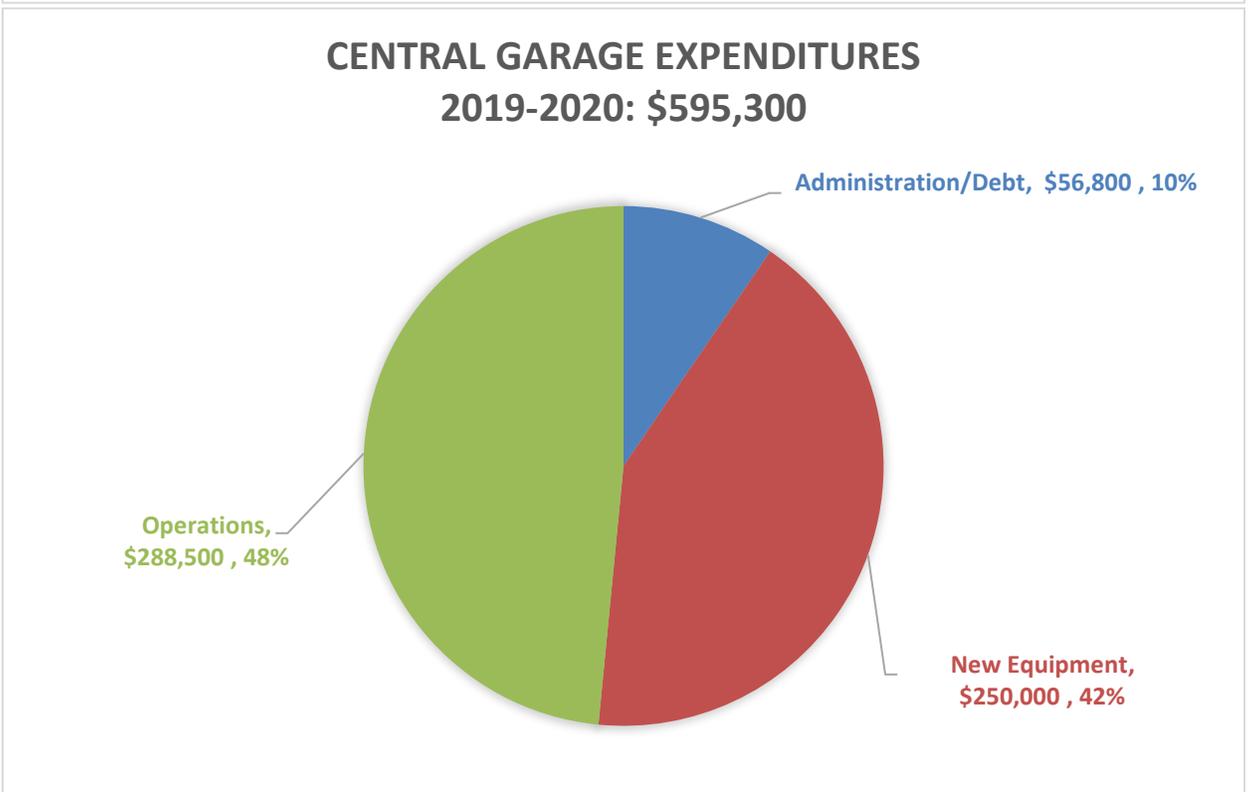
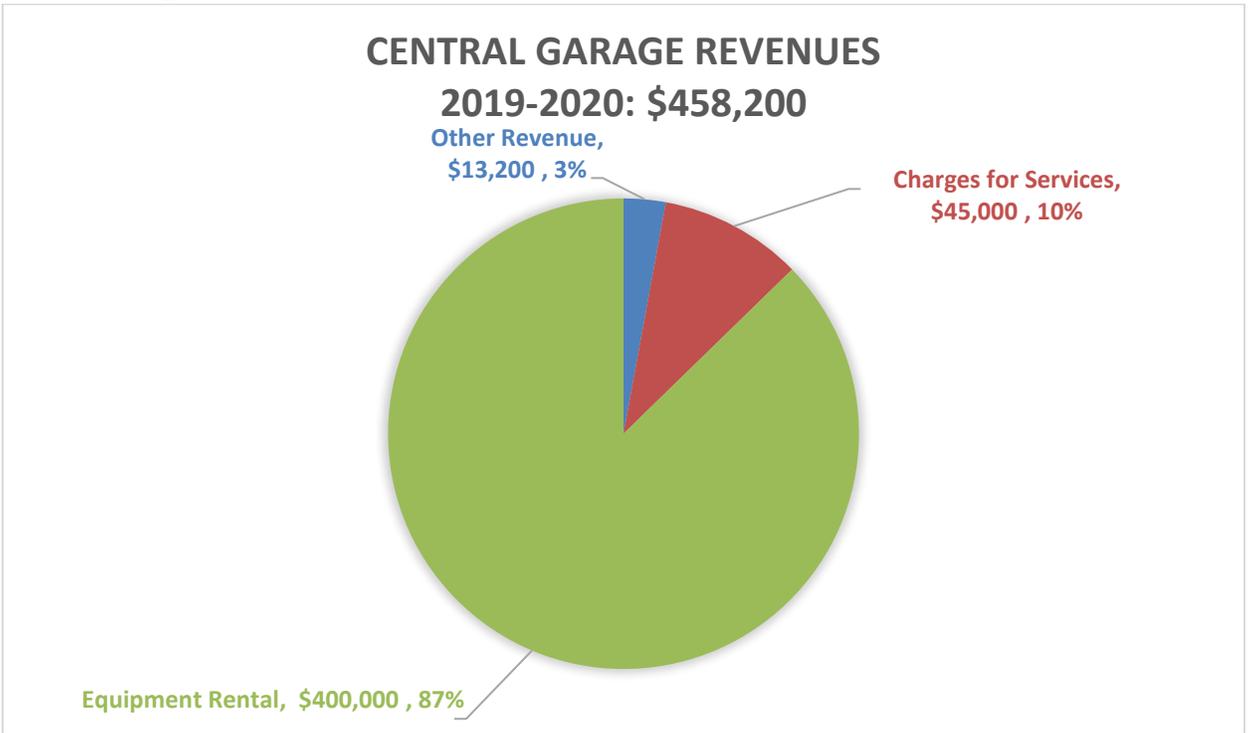
**Other**

A detailed narrative is not necessary to explain the expenditure areas for selected miscellaneous City funds. The pie charts below illustrate the budgeted expenditures for FY19-20 for the referenced funds.

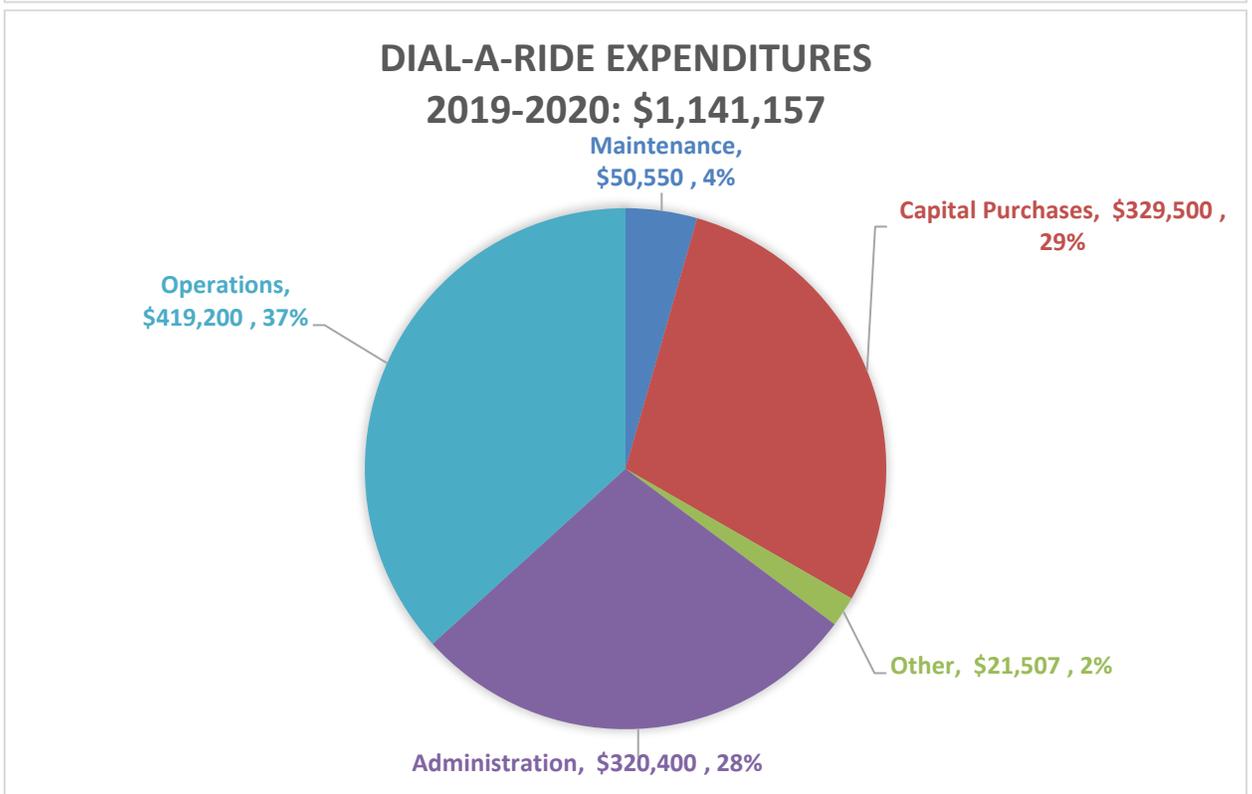
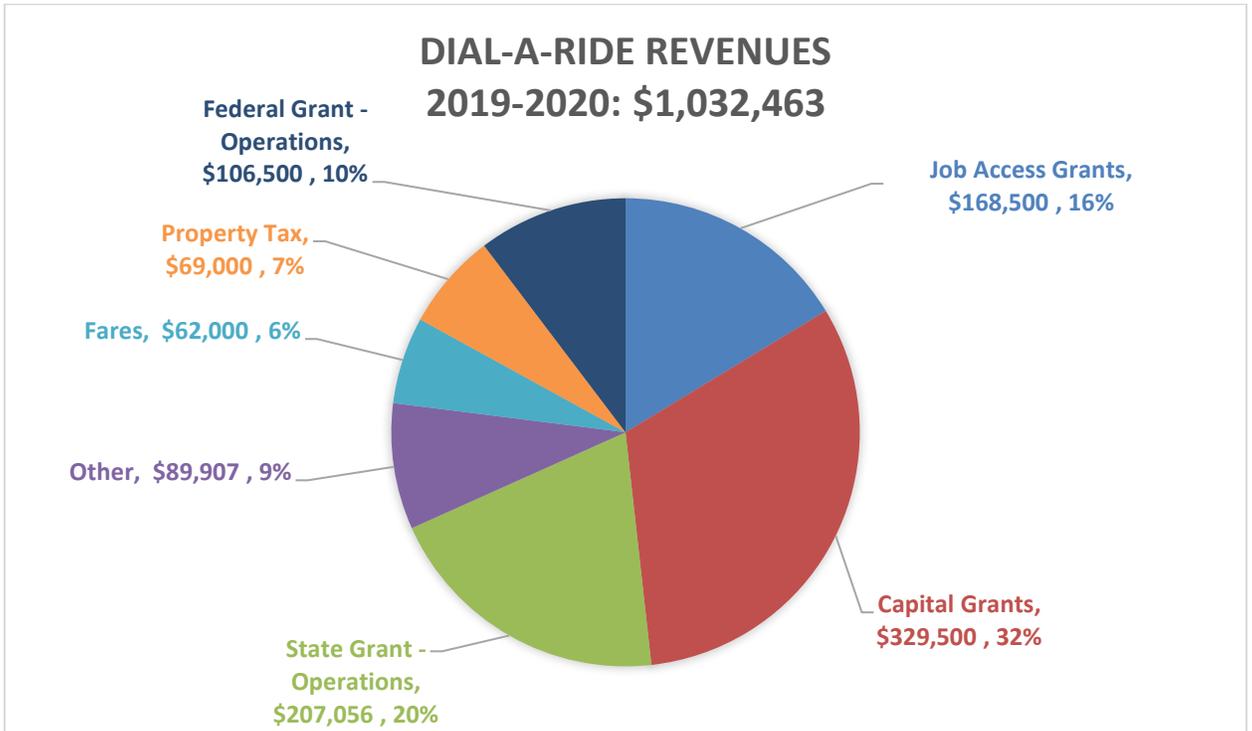
Capital Improvement Fund:



Central Garage Fund:



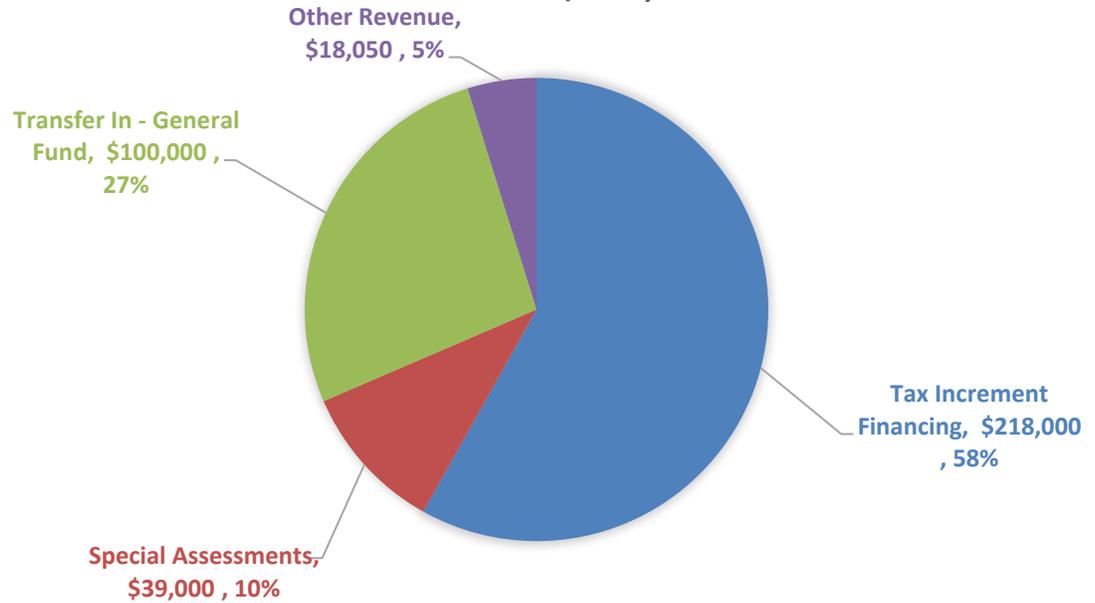
Dial-A-Ride Fund:



Downtown Development Authority Fund:

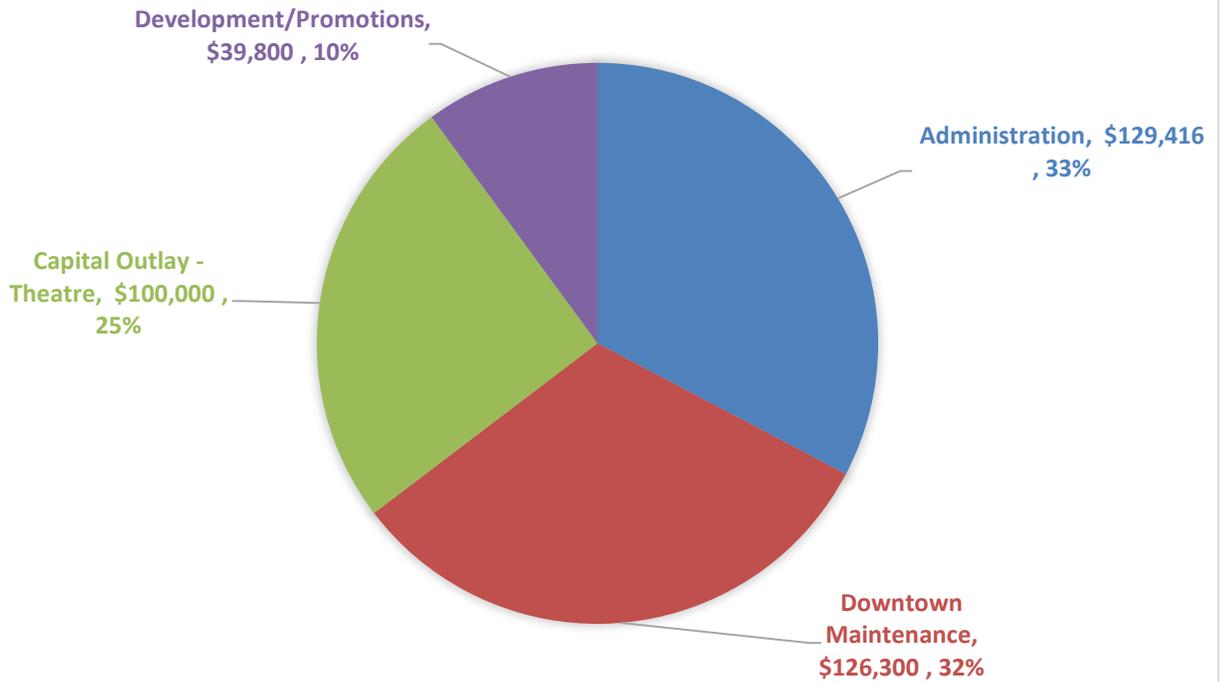
**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REVENUES**

**2019-2020: \$375,050**

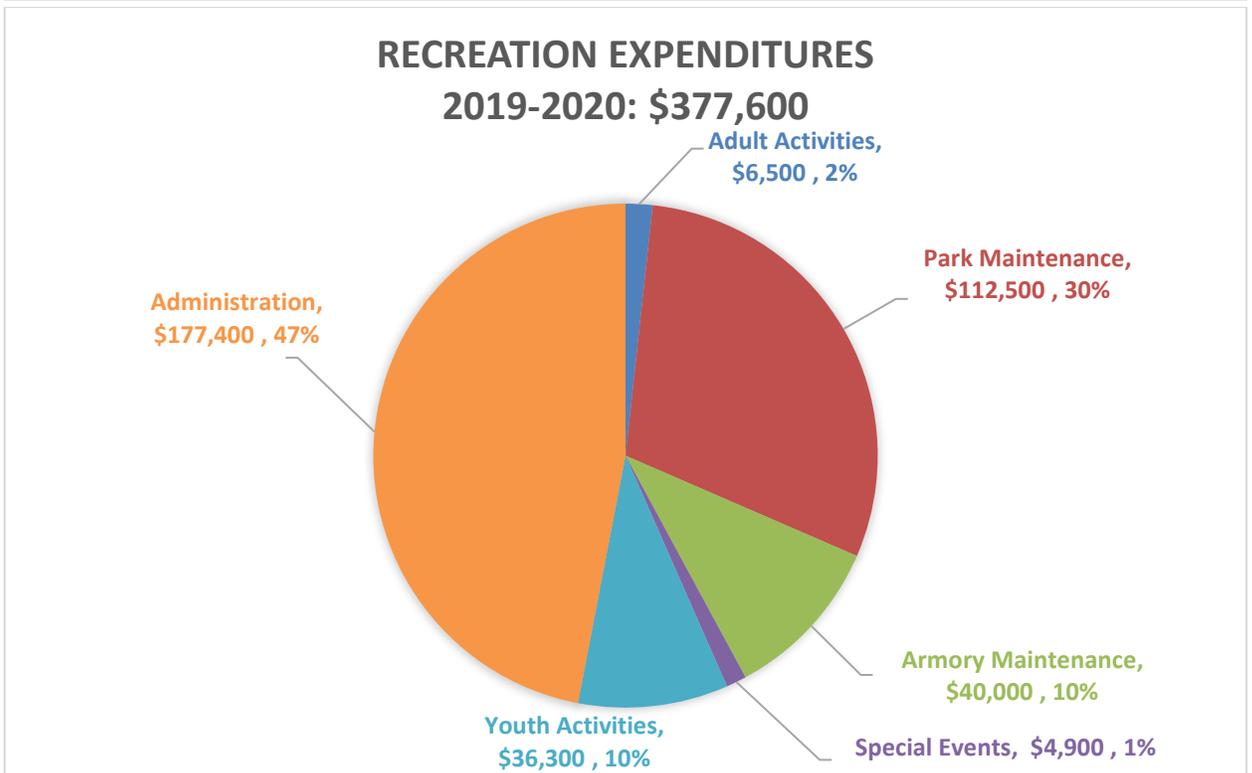
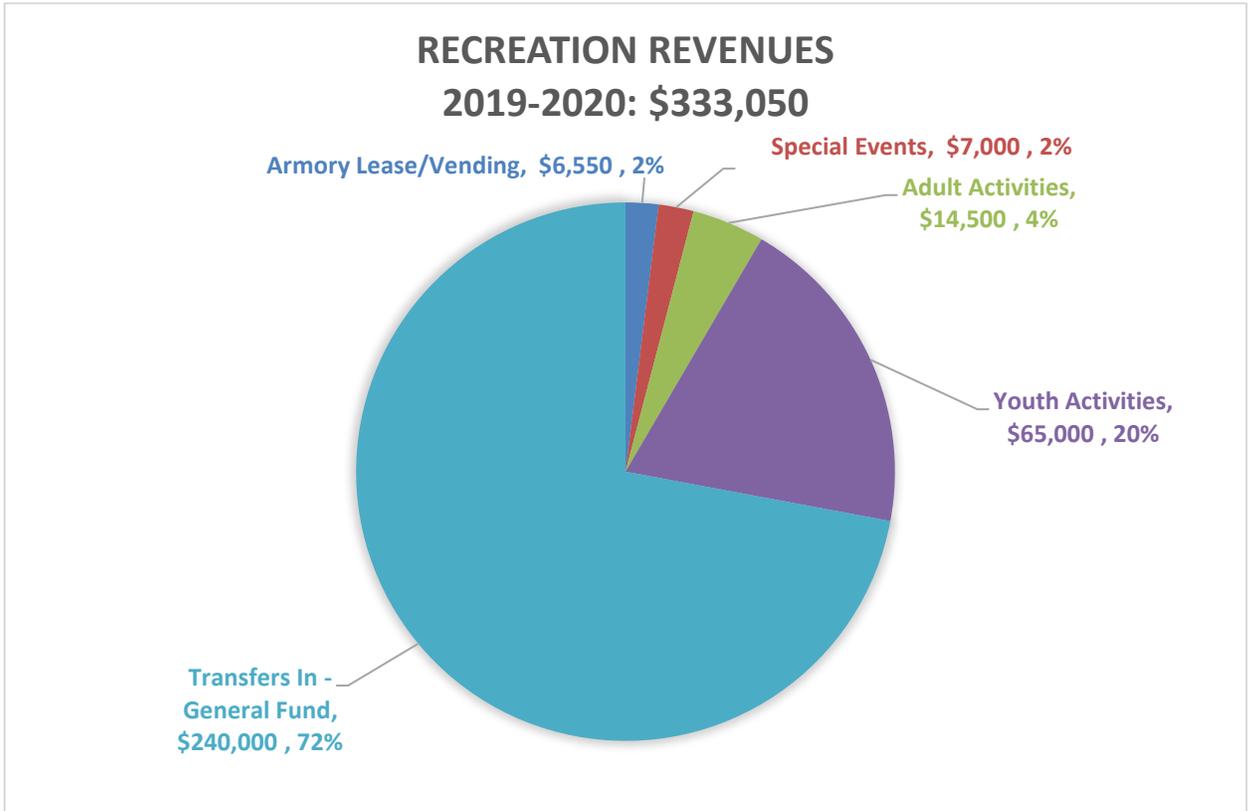


**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY EXPENDITURES**

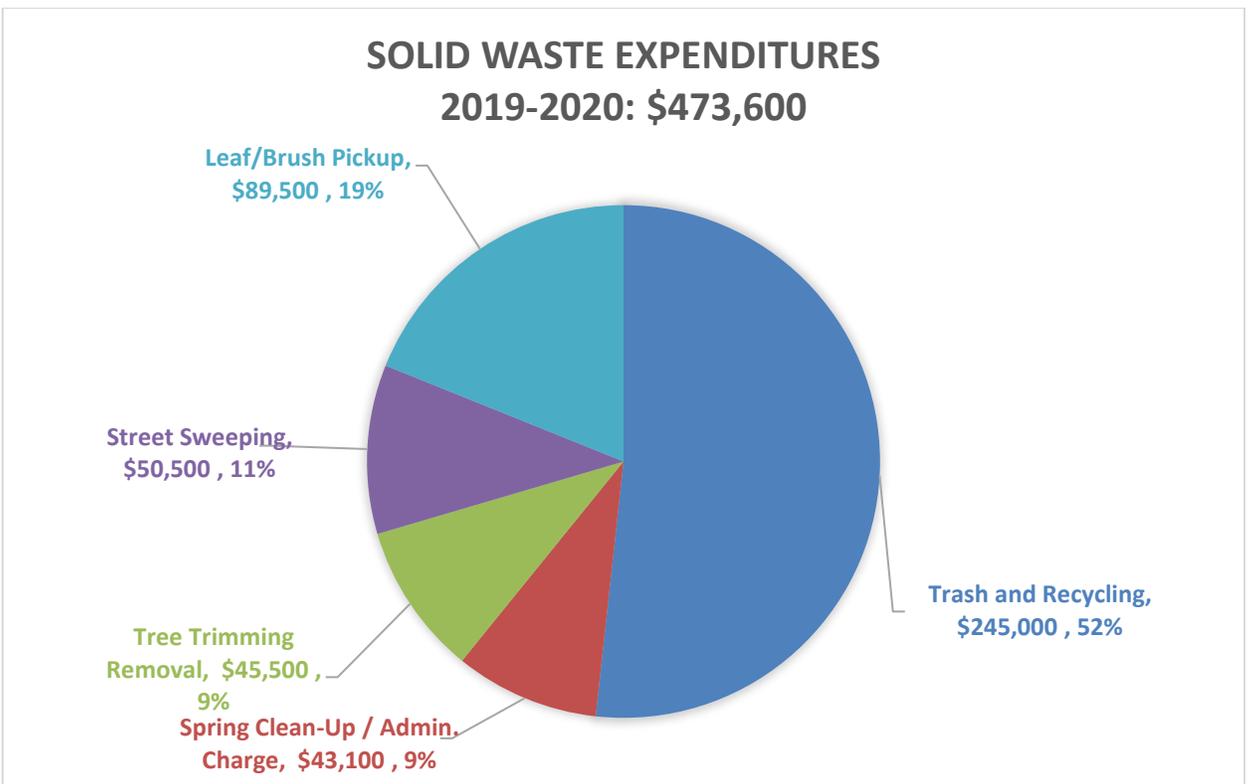
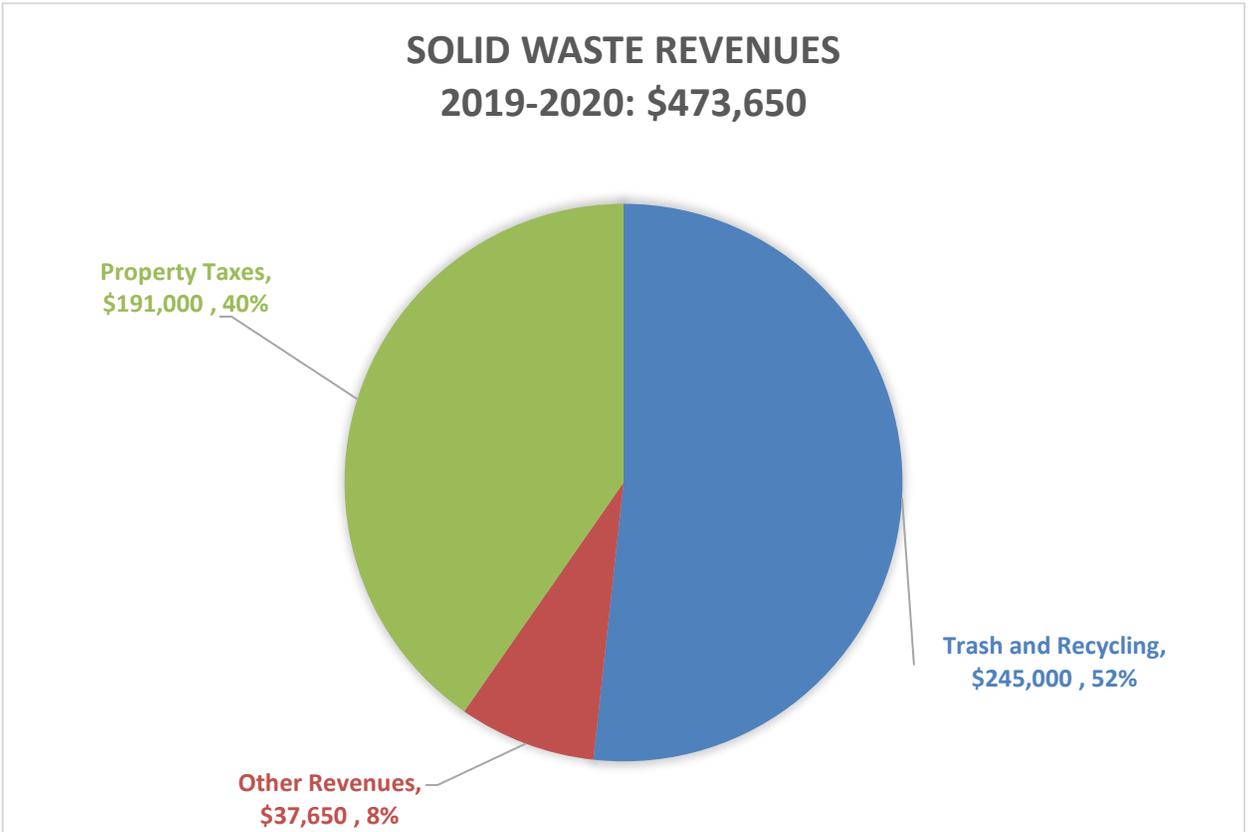
**2019-2020: \$395,516**



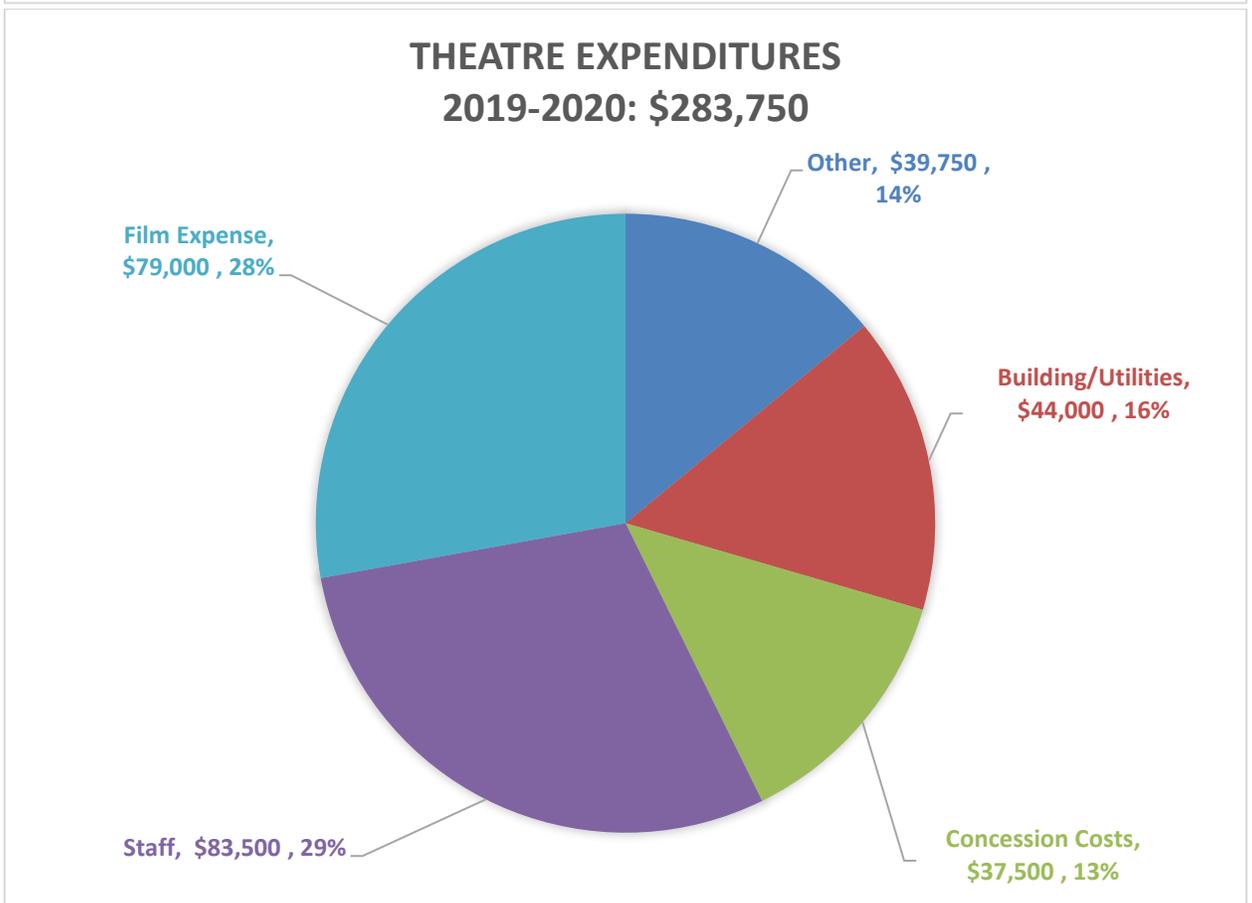
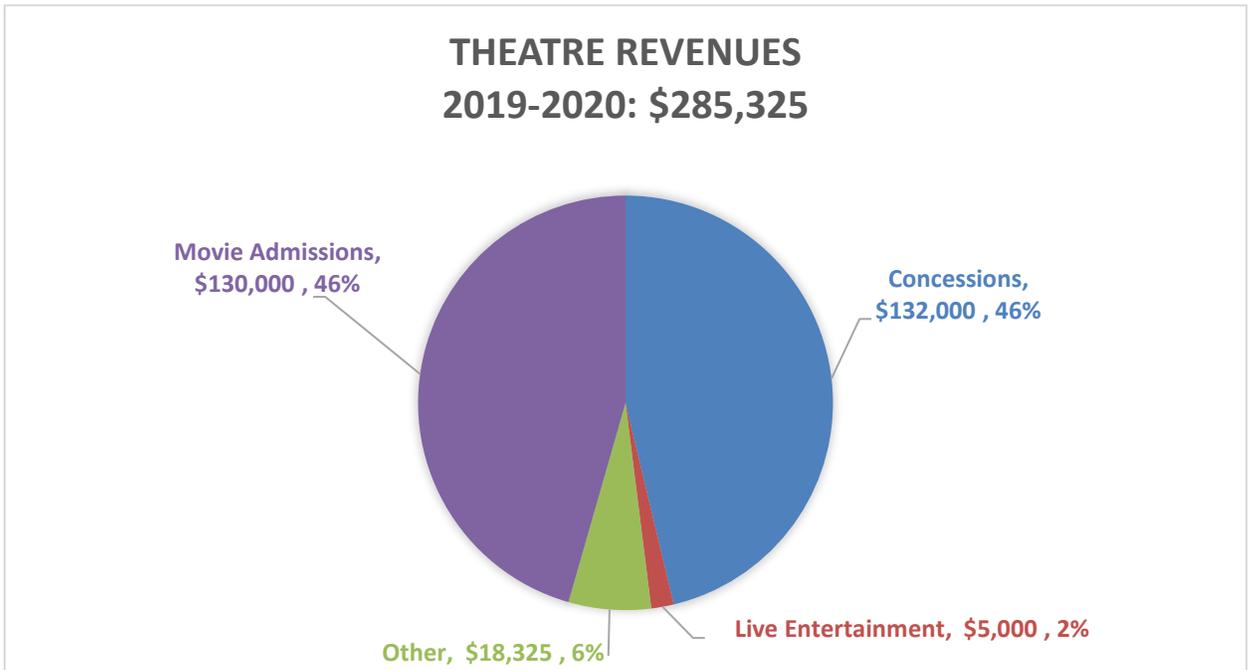
Parks and Recreation Fund:



Solid Waste Fund:



Theatre Fund:



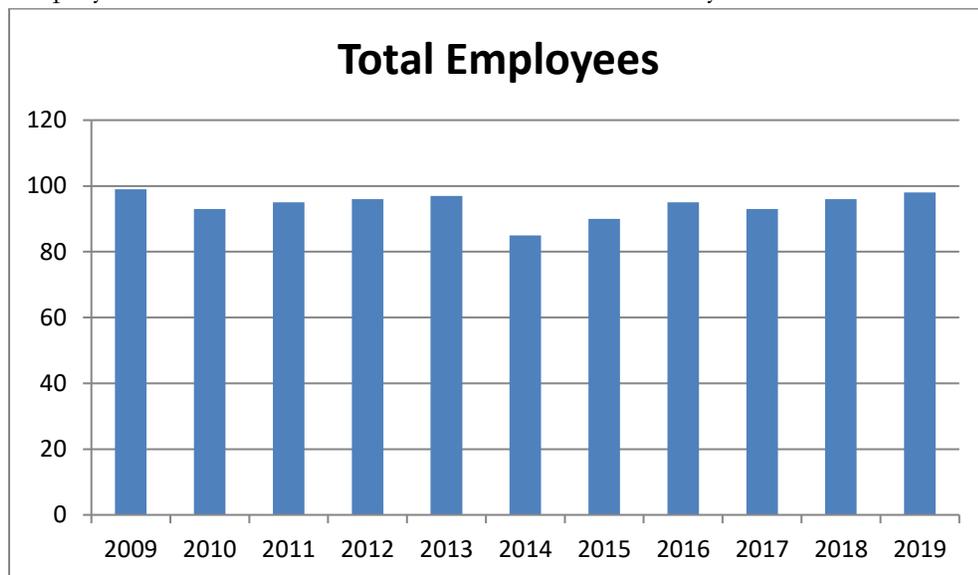
## Budgetary Process

The City operates on a July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year. The process by which the annual fiscal year budget is developed is established by Article V of the City Charter which was approved by City voters on November 2, 1993. Article V of the City Charter requires the City Manager on or before the first day of May each year to submit to the City Council a budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The proposed budget is to include a statement of proposed revenues and expenditures for each fund along with a proposed capital improvement plan. Upon receiving the proposed budget and conducting a public hearing, the City Council may adopt the budget. Article V of the City Charter requires the City Council to adopt the budget on or before June 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

During the course of each fiscal year the City Council receives regular updates on the finances of the City. These updates come in the form of financial reports, investment reports, periodic adjustments to the adopted budget, which require City Council approval, and involvement in certain major expenditures. The City Council also contracts with an independent auditing firm which is responsible for completing an annual fiscal year audit. Traditionally, the annual audit is presented to the City Council at a public meeting in November. The audit analyzes the fiscal year's revenues and expenditures and includes comments about the internal control practices of City administration. The most recent City audit may be viewed at the City's website at [www.cityofionia.org](http://www.cityofionia.org)

## Employees

The City's greatest asset is its employees which are charged with delivering important services to the community, in some cases around the clock. As of December 31, 2019, the City had 98 employees which range from full-time to temporary part-time to paid on-call. The graph below illustrates total employment as of December 31<sup>st</sup> for the listed calendar years.



A majority of the City's employees are union with the following unions representing employees within the referenced departments:

<u>Union</u>	<u>Employees Covered</u>	<u>Expiration Date of Current Collective Bargaining Agreement</u>
Teamsters Local 214	Public Utilities/ Public Works	June 30, 2020
Police Officers Assoc. of MI	Public Safety	June 30, 2021
AFSCME AFL-CIO	Clerical	June 30, 2024
AFSCME AFL-CIO	Dial-A-Ride	July 1, 2024

The collective bargaining agreements between the City and each union address a variety of employer/employee issues ranging from minimum staffing levels and work conditions to wages and benefits. The City provides a competitive wage and benefits package by union group which has been helpful in maintaining stability and longevity among the City's workforce.

### Reserves Held by the City

Like your personal finances, the City sets aside funds to address major purchases or unforeseen/unplanned expenses. The reserves held by each fund fluctuates as major purchases or capital projects are planned and then completed. During the past few fiscal years the City has tapped some of its reserves to address revenue deficiencies in certain funds. Additionally, in anticipation of "rainier days" the City has attempted to accumulate additional reserves in some funds. During 2011, the City Council adopted an updated Fund Balance Policy for the City. The policy categorizes fund balance into four categories: non-spendable fund balance, restricted fund balance, committed fund balance and assigned fund balance. The policy states that when fund balance is needed to meet obligations, it shall be expended from most restrictive to least restrictive. The policy also establishes a minimum fund balance level for the General Fund of ten percent of adopted expenditures.

The City had total cash on-hand of \$6,360,904 as of June 30, 2019. When reviewing the table please remember that cash and fund balance are different. Cash represents actual cash on-hand either in a checking or savings account at a local financial institution or in the form of a certificate of deposit or pooled investment account. Fund balance is not only cash but other assets that may be available to the fund including accounts receivable and is traditionally the difference between the assets of a fund and the funds liabilities.

A review of the City's June 30, 2019 audit, as prepared by the City's auditors Vredeveld Haefner, LLC, Grand Rapids, revealed the following cash and pooled investments on a per fund basis:

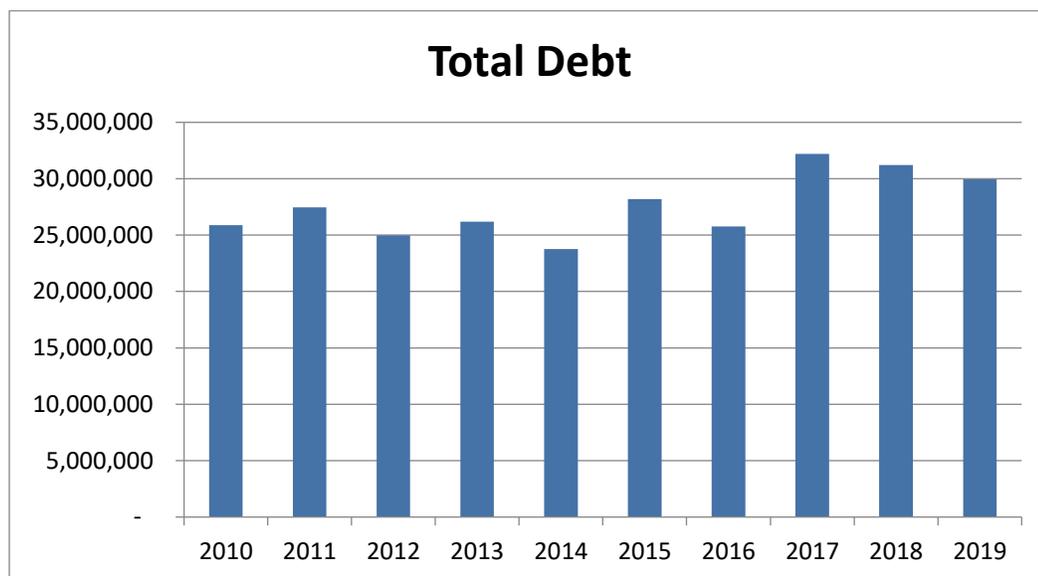
<u>FUND</u>	<u>FUND TYPE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Property Tax Fund	Agency	\$ 0.00
Capital Improvement Fund	Capital Projects	\$ 593,671.00
Environmental Fund	Capital Projects	\$ 181,282.00
Parks Facilities	Capital Projects	\$ 194.00
Sidewalk Fund	Capital Projects	\$ 8,350.00
Brownfield Redev. Auth. Fund	Component Unit	\$ 153,675.00
Downtown Dev. Auth. Fund	Component Unit	\$ 61,545.00
Local Dev. Finance Auth. Fund	Component Unit	\$ 152,699.00
Dial-A-Ride Fund	Enterprise	\$ 466,231.00
Water Fund	Enterprise	\$ 0.00
Sewer Fund	Enterprise	\$ 2,991,113.00
Theatre Fund	Enterprise	\$ 42,669.00
General Fund	Governmental	\$ 609,559.00
Central Garage Fund	Internal Service	\$ 280,481.00
Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund	Permanent-Endowed	\$ 5,301.00
Drug Forfeiture Fund	Special Revenue	\$ 6,031.00
Local Street Fund	Special Revenue	\$ 297,137.00
Major Street Fund	Special Revenue	\$ 226,607.00
Parks Facilities – Improvements	Special Revenue	\$ 114,159.00
Public Safety Donation Fund	Special Revenue	\$ 10,003.00
Public Safety Vehicle Fund	Special Revenue	\$ 5,863.00
Recreation Fund	Special Revenue	\$ 115,911.00
Solid Waste Fund	Special Revenue	\$ <u>38,423.00</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 6,360,904.00

#### Debt Issued by the City

From time to time the City issues debt to finance capital projects or purchases which is repaid over multiple fiscal years and is considered “long-term debt”. The City currently has no outstanding “short-term debt” which is typically debt associated with financing day to day operational activities. The City either issues debt directly on its own or through the Ionia County Board of Public Works where the City can take advantage of lower interest rates due to the County’s superior bond rating. Repayment of debt comes from a variety of revenue sources. In some cases a dedicated millage is used to retire debt while in other cases general tax dollars or utility revenues finance the repayment.

The City’s current outstanding debt has financed projects involving the reconstruction of the water distribution and sanitary sewer collection system. The City does not plan to issue any new debt during FY19-20.

The total outstanding debt for the City is outlined in the graph below.



### Unfunded Liabilities

The City currently provides eligible employees with a retirement benefit through the Municipal Employees’ Retirement System of Michigan (MERS). Depending on the department the employee works for and their date of hire with the City, employees either receive a defined benefit retirement or a hybrid retirement benefit (the “hybrid” is comprised of two components – a defined benefit multiplier and a “fixed” defined benefit contribution). The City annually funds the required contribution to MERS as calculated by MERS through its actuary. The table below reflects the annual contribution the City made to MERS for the past several calendar years:

Calendar Year Ending	Employer Contributions	
	Required	Additional
December 31, 2012	\$ 622,569.00	\$ 0.00
December 31, 2013	\$ 690,163.00	\$ 0.00
December 31, 2014	\$ 754,134.00	\$ 125,000.00
December 31, 2015	\$ 847,700.00	\$ 140,000.00
December 31, 2016	\$ 889,849.00	\$ 140,000.00
December 31, 2017	\$ 944,509.00	\$ 150,000.00
December 31, 2018	\$ 1,018,701.00	\$ 250,000.00

As of December 31, 2018, the City was 50.1% funded as determined by MERS with future unfunded accrued liabilities of \$11,803,486.

The City also provides employees with a deferred compensation plan created pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 457. The Plan is available to eligible employees and permits an

employee to defer a portion of their salary until future years. The City contributes a fixed percentage of each employee's salary to the employee's deferred compensation account. Employees are permitted to contribute on their own utilizing their own resources per IRS rules. There are no unfunded liabilities associated with the deferred compensation program.

The City does not provide retirees with post-employment benefits such as retiree health care. Retired employees do have the option at their expense to subscribe through the City for their health insurance. A few employees currently take advantage of this option.

Other than retirement expenses, the City's only accrued non-current employee liability is for unused personal, sick and vacation time earned by employees but not yet taken. As of June 30, 2019, the liability for this unused time totaled \$505,265.

#### Additional Information

Additional information regarding the City's finances including the annual appropriation Resolution, audit and performance dashboard is available at the City's website at [www.cityofionia.org](http://www.cityofionia.org).

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