



City Administrator & Staff Update

2025.03.21

Meetings: Work sessions - March 31, 5pm (followed by April 7th and April 16th if needed), City Council April 2nd - 5:30pm separate budget meeting to meet state requirements. Regular meeting to follow.

- **Property Tax Legislation:** Please continue to track this on the League's Legislative Updates.
 - CityScape Articles: Attached are two articles/items from the March 2025 Iowa League City Scape magazine.
 - Also attached are a legislative summary from the League and a PowerPoint on HSB 313 and SSB 1208
 - A property summary or Property Tax Basics from Bondurant is included and is a tool I'd like to have us put together.
- **Friday Forum at Chamber** – Attended the Chamber's Friday Forum for our 10-15 min city update in advance of the legislators. Summary/Notes of Items touch on follows:
 - IISC: Shared Services (pool, street striping/paint, joint meetings), Arts & Culture, Downtown Streetscape, and the May 8th event.
 - Budget: Summary of budget and issues.
 - Legislature: Noted two recent Iowa League Articles
 - Two CityScape Articles
 - HF 718 changes, note cities can't address 2 years negative growth
- **Trail and City Hall Plantings:** The final list of repairs (minor) to address with the contractor is in their hands and upon completion we can close out the project.
- **Surfnet:** We met with Surfnet. Made introductions, discussed their business (mainly Indiana, Illinois and Michigan and no Iowa presence yet). They are looking at options for the region and will keep us posted.
- **SCC/GRMC Agency Street Crossing Improvements:** Working with GRMC and SCC to improve the crossing between the two campuses – automatic triggering of the crossing and better lighting. These two entities and sharing the cost of the project.
- **IMMI v. Denver:** In lieu of attending IMMI next week in Iowa City (Wed-Friday), I will be driving to Denver with our son to help him locate an apartment, check out the area, etc. Moving will take place down the road as he starts on the 31st.

IT (Newberry)

- Monday and Tuesday, I worked on deploying the new camera system for the remodeled room. This was my first time configuring this system, but it turned out to be a solid choice for the price. Additionally, I connected the system to the DVR as a backup in case the primary unit fails to record. I also integrated it with the cloud, allowing management to monitor remotely if needed.

- I attended a Trusted Tech Team meeting this week, where I completed the cancellation of unnecessary licenses and added basic licenses for council members who don't use Office. Also, Microsoft is increasing prices in April, so locking in a contract now secures the current pricing for another year.
- We received the Unitrends packages this week, and I should be able to begin deploying the new backup solution soon.
- I am deploying a new tool this week to assist with threat hunting and centralizing threat intelligence. Additionally, I continue fine-tuning our IDS to reduce false positives. This should improve efficiency by minimizing time spent on unnecessary investigations.

Police/Fire (Logan)

Vacation

- FD SOPs are a priority to complete.
- Several projects around the station have been completed.
- Police and Fire were happy to participate in the business of the year festivities.

Building (Crooks)

Building

1. Four new building permits have been issued.
2. One additional application has been submitted and in review.
3. Met with a property owner to review his business plan for his property
4. Site inspection was completed on an ongoing project at Caspian Village

Code Enforcement

1. No new notices were mailed out this week
2. Follow up was conducted on outstanding nuisances. There are some open nuisance cases where the owners have contacted me. They have a plan to comply and have requested additional time.

Rental

1. Issued one rental permit
2. Spoke to property owner about recently acquired rental property.

Miscellaneous

1. Received a business license application for a fireworks tent and it's in review pending additional information.
2. Completed issuance of mobile food license.
3. Worked at reviewing the proposed zoning code.
4. Met with property owner regarding permit requirements
5. Met with business owner about additional services.

City Clerk (Fry)

Finance (Moore)

- This week, I've primarily been working on the budget amendment, which has involved a lot of data analysis and making sure everything is accurate and compliant.
- I've also been using Gamma, an AI software that specializes in PowerPoint presentations, to create some dynamic and engaging slides.

- On top of that, I've been handling various other tasks and projects that have come up, requiring me to be flexible and adapt quickly to meet all deadlines and deliverables efficiently.

Public Works (Williams)

Streets

- Water and sewer labs

Utilities

- Lift station rounds
- Clean lift stations
- Locates (55)

Other Activities

- Parks and Broadway Street trash and recycling
- Service trucks and squad cars
- Sign maintenance
- Building maintenance and clean up
- Fix sewer (Kimberly)
- Haul mulch
- Make watering wagon for city hall plants
- Patch
- Dig out ditch (Mt pleasant and agency)
- Clean up stump grindings (7 stumps)

Projects

- Spring water main is completed, and the services are hooked up. Local Boring will be back in a couple weeks to finish up on clean up and dirt work
- SCC has separated their storm water from our sanitary sewer
- The DOT has closed West Burlington Ave
- The boiler is in at the pool and the contractor is working on installation

Additional Items/Upcoming Items of Interest

- Cole signed up to take his grade 2 in water distribution
- Jacob has signed up for his grade 2 in wastewater treatment
- West Burlington school would like to donate lights from their softball field for our ball diamonds. I am looking into what it would take to make that possible.

Actions and Consequences

There is no parent or supervisor that has not stated at some point – actions have consequences. This statement is brutal in its simplicity and poignant in its truth.

Over the last decade, cities have faced a flurry of legislation intended to restrict freedoms and revenues, mandate certain actions, and preempt local authority. This legislative session is no different. Since the beginning of session, the League's Governmental Affairs team has seen bills proposed that limit utility rate increase, eliminate franchise fees, eliminate pet license fees, preempts cities abilities to regulate zoning, weaken contractor bond requirements, and bans the regulation of golf carts on city streets. All of these bills seem to operate under the assumption that a one-size-fits-all approach will work equally well for Waterloo and Woodburn.

While not all of these ideas will become law, it points to a troubling disconnect between the state policy makers and their local government partners, largely due to the lack of communication. All too often, we are surprised by these ideas and are forced to respond quickly from a position of opposition. In many cases, the crux of the issue might have been addressed had the lawmaker reached out to city officials in advance. We could help them fix whatever appears to be broken.

This lack of communication was particularly evident two sessions ago when the legislature passed HF718. It was passed at the end of session in just five days without local officials input. The limitations imposed have continued to restrict city revenues and eliminated incentives for a city to grow. As a result, some cities have begun to question whether their city can afford to grow at all, as they currently cannot capture the revenues necessary to provide essential services. Many of the negative impacts of HF 718 were unintended, but undermined several priorities of the legislature due to a lack of communication, input and vetting. Now they are forced to keep going back to layer band-aids on previous bills. Collaboration can create better outcomes for all parties.

This edition of *Cityscape* has several articles that address the financial strains these legislative decisions are creating. There are articles that include tips on how parks and recreation departments can respond to budget reductions; how property tax changes are negatively impacting local budgets and how the City of Cedar Rapids continues to try and foster a great community in the face of reductions.

The limitations on revenues are just part of the story. Cities are also facing increasing costs for equipment, such as fire trucks and police cars;

increasing wages to attract and retain essential employees such as police and certified utility operators; and a growing uncertainty with grants and loans that have traditionally been provided by the federal government.

This is a time of great uncertainty for city leaders and much can be solved by better communication and outreach. The best legislation is done in partnership with locally elected leaders.

We urge city officials and community members alike to engage with their legislators, share their perspectives, and push for meaningful collaboration. Contact your representatives, attend public hearings, and make your voice heard. Together, we can shape policies that truly support our cities and the people who call them home. 



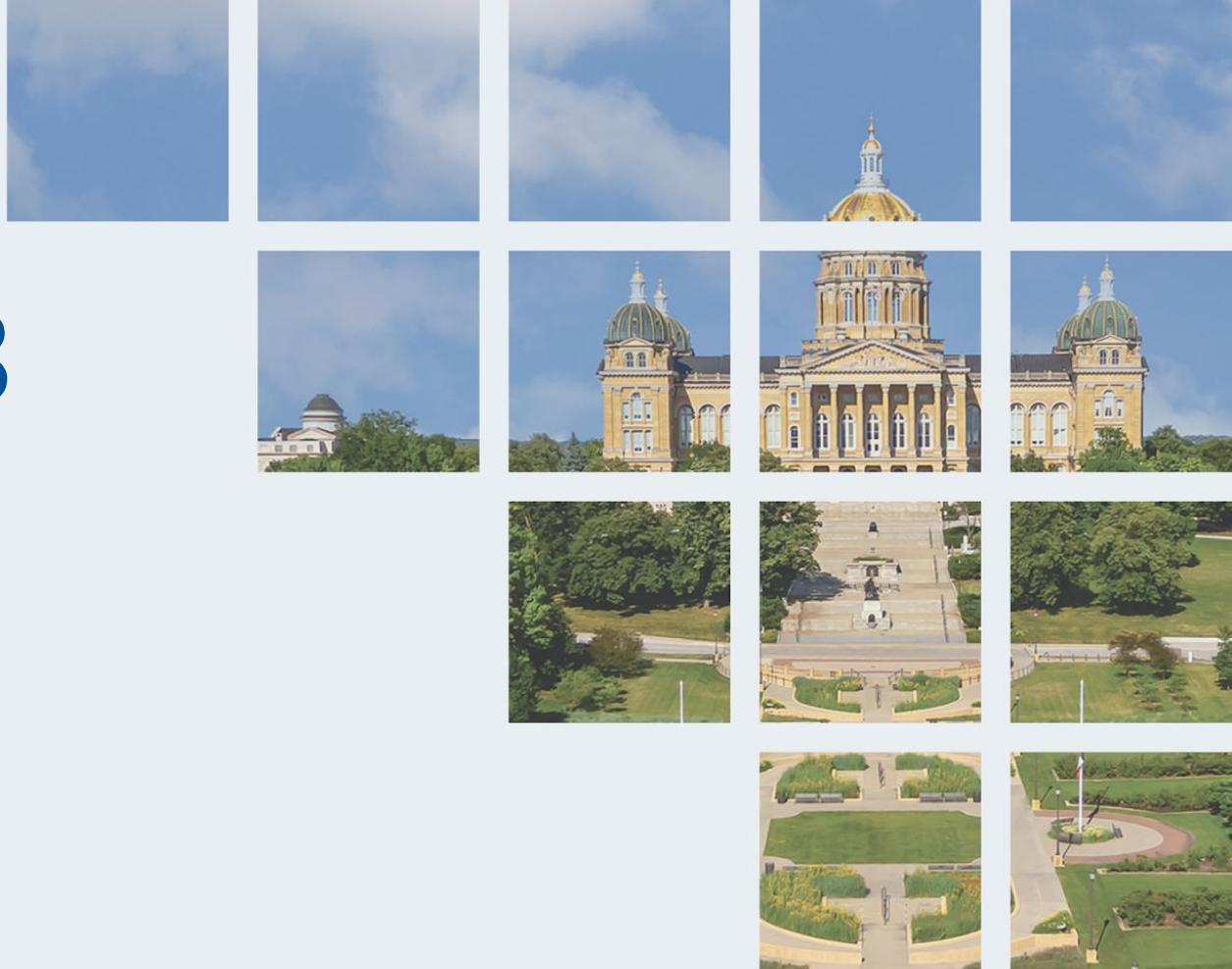
Alan Kemp is the Executive Director for the Iowa League of Cities.

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Brief Overview

*DRAFT/Unofficial Analysis
for the Iowa League of Cities*

March 14, 2025



HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Companion Bills Introduced by Representative Kaufmann & Senator Dawson

Iowa League of Cities was invited to an overview presentation the day of its release, alongside representatives from counties, school boards, and other stakeholders.

- Legislators made clear the bill is not on a fast track. They will be meeting with the League and other stakeholders to improve the bill and understand its impacts

Stated purpose of the legislation from legislature:

- \$400 million total property tax cut for Iowans
- Largest overhaul of property tax system since its current format was created in the 1970s
- Phases out the rollback over a 5-year period
- Implements a 2% revenue restriction
 - New valuation/growth as defined in bill is excluded from revenue restriction
 - Certain uncapped levies such as insurance and employee benefits also excluded
- Repeals various credits, replacing credits with a \$25k homestead exemption

The stated goal upon full implementation is to have a less complicated tax system that allows property taxpayers to better plan for what future taxes may be.

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division II: Restricting the CGFL

In Brief: Hard cap of 2% on general fund revenues

How does it work?

A formula lowers the CGFL to a levy rate that produces a 2% hard cap on revenues generated by it.*

Isn't that what we have under HF 718?

Not exactly. Although this proposes using the CGFL, major differences include:

- No “growth” triggers or “tiers” – all cities follow the same ratcheting formula
- Instead of slowing/“shaving a percentage of growth,” this places a hard cap
- The bill defines “new construction” and exempts a certain portion of growth from the 2% cap (but note challenges in the next slide)

*Certain levies will remain outside of the hard cap

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division II: Restricting the CGFL

In Brief: Hard cap of 2% on general fund revenues

New Construction

- The definition is not clear on how Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is treated in relation to the 2% cap.
- Need to verify how property tax abatement at expiration is handled.
- The Department of Management confirmed that County Auditors should be tracking tax abatement in the new construction valuation data.
- **We are working to clarify whether property defined as “new construction” is exempted after its first year. If it isn’t, it will delay its impact on the hard cap and levy ratcheting for one year.**

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division II: Restricting the CGFL

In Brief: Hard cap of 2% on general fund revenues

What is the new CGFL formula under the bill?

- CGFL (upcoming budget year) = $1,000 * (1.02 * \text{dollars levied by the current year CGFL}) / (\text{total taxable value of upcoming budget year} - \text{new construction as defined})$
- Existing TIF Valuation
 - Although TIF valuation is not included in the levy “ratcheting” formula, it is still subject to the calculated CGFL levy. This will impact existing TIF agreements due to the lower levy rate.*

*The League is continuing conversations with legislators to ensure the current understanding HSB 313/SSB 1208 and how it relates to TIF

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division IV: Removing Rollback (except for Ag)

In Brief: Residential, commercial, industrial and rail property rollbacks phase-in up to 100% by FY31; Ag-residential coupling removed and Ag follows a productivity-based formula; shift of property taxes to residential and notably to multifamily properties.

Over FY27 – FY31, rollbacks for listed classifications go to 100%

All revenue generated by the CGFL is still capped at 2% by Division II, so this does not generate additional revenue from the CGFL.

Would represent a shift to residential homeowners unless **partially** offset by the homestead exemption. Beginning in FY31, may slowly continue to shift to residential as the homestead exemption is fully phased-in.

Eliminates the state's \$125M appropriation related to the conversion of the original Business Property Tax Credit to a 2-tiered rollback. Multi-residential property is now classified as residential and will be impacted by the phase-in to 100% rollback and no homestead exemption.

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division V: Converts the homestead credit to an expanded homestead exemption

In brief: the homestead credit is phased-out and eliminated – replaced with a phase-in of a homestead exemption without state support.

Over FY28-FY31, the homestead credit phases out and is eliminated, all state funding is eliminated.

Over 27-FY30, the new expanded homestead is phased-in with no state funding.

Creates a reduction in property taxes for local governments, with various effects dependent on the community housing makeup.

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division VI: Expands Veteran/Military Property Tax Exemption

Over FY27-FY29, Increases the veteran/military property tax exemption from the current \$4,000 → \$7,000

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division VII: Restricts Other Rate-Limited City Levies

In brief: Aside from the CGFL, restricts all other rate-limited ad-valorem city levies to 2% hard cap; restricts bonds or indebtedness payable from a rate-limited levy to fund general operations

Currently authorized levies may not be imposed going forward unless they were imposed in the FY25 budget

How does it work? A formula lowers the rate-limited levy to a levy rate that produces a 2% hard cap on revenues generated by it.

What is the formula for this under the bill?

Levy (upcoming budget year) = $1,000 * (1.02 * \text{dollars levied by the current year Levy}) / (\text{total taxable value of upcoming budget year})$

- Does not exempt new construction from the 2% cap on these levies
- Ratcheting does not include non-rate-limited levies, such as the debt service levy, trust & agency levies, or the self-insurance/liability/property levy

Continued on next slide...

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division VII: Restricts Other Rate-Limited City Levies *(Continued)*

***In brief:* Aside from the CGFL, restricts all other rate-limited ad-valorem city levies to 2% hard cap; restricts bonds or indebtedness payable from a rate-limited levy to fund general operations**

- Restricts bonds or indebtedness payable from a rate-limited ad-valorem levy to fund general operations or use proceeds from sale of bonds to fund generation operations.
(Excludes services financed by statutory funds other than a debt service fund.)
- Bond counsel has shared items in the “essential corporate purpose” definition of code 384.24 are protected from this.

HSB 313 / SSB 1208

Division VIII: Low-Income Elderly Property Tax Credit

In brief: Expands the income threshold for eligibility of this credit from 250% of the federal poverty level to up to 350% of the federal poverty level.

*Must be 70 years old or older (this did not change)

What will this do? → More Iowans will be eligible for this credit.

Feedback we are providing to lawmakers:

2% revenue restriction unlikely to keep up with city expenses

- Cost of goods and services outpaces this rate
- Wages/retaining/recruiting workforce
- Cities with special circumstances (disaster recovery)
- “Layers” with the expanded property tax exemptions and rate-limited levy restrictions

Expanded property tax exemptions further restrict revenues

Presents risks to economic development

- Likely impacts the utility of TIF, and may also impact existing agreements
- Seeing a decrease in revenues, cities may struggle to afford providing essential city services and consider slowing growth and/or re-prioritizing efforts
- Non-growing cities may be at a disadvantage due to expenses outpacing valuations

“New Construction” Section (see Div. 1, Sec. 7 & Div. 2, Sec. 13) needs adjustments:

- Should ensure TIF increment and property tax abatement is included
- If TIF increment is not considered, will cities want to use TIF? When increment rolls off, it **greatly** impacts the city’s CGFL and rate-limited levies applied across all non-TIF valuation.
- We are verifying whether the new construction exemption carries out longer than one year.
- When TIF increment is used, it does not impact the ratcheting, and disincentivizes sunsetting TIF.



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In Regards to the Current Property Tax Legislation

March 14, 2025

The League is committed to ensuring Iowa's cities have the tools they need to understand and respond to the property tax proposal introduced last Thursday. To assist with this, we are developing a formula to help cities model the potential impacts of the bill and encourage members to use this formula to inform our position on the legislation. This will be sent out next week in a Legislative Alert.

Prior to HSB 313 and SSB 1208 being proposed, the League was invited into a private meeting with bill sponsors and other taxing entities where we were provided highlights of the proposal. Legislators made it clear this is not the final version of the bill and specifically requested feedback from the League, county, and school board representatives, and members of the business community. This invitation reflects the constructive approach the League has taken in engaging with lawmakers, including our messaging during our recent Local Leaders Day.

Legislators are committed to fulfilling their campaign promises of lowering property taxes, and they view this bill as a modernization effort to simplify the tax system for both local governments and taxpayers. The League fully recognizes the challenges cities face in balancing budgets, delivering services, and navigating complex legislative change. Our advocacy remains focused on ensuring lawmakers understand the real-world impact of their proposals on Iowa's communities while preserving cities' ability to have a voice in the legislative process.

The League is actively engaging with legislators to shape the final outcome of the bill, ensuring the concerns and priorities of cities are voiced. While we are committed to working with state leaders where common ground exists, we will also continue to advocate strongly on behalf of our members. This is why it is critical for city leaders to review the legislation and model the effects on their respective community. Data-driven analysis will strengthen our collective ability to advocate for necessary amendments and ensure cities' perspectives are taken seriously in the legislative process for both this property tax proposal and beyond.

We encourage all city officials to review the bill and share their findings with the League. By demonstrating the real impact of this legislation, we can continue to advocate effectively and credibly on behalf of Iowa's cities.

Sincerely,

Alan Kemp, Executive Director

Brad Cavanagh, Mayor of Dubuque and Iowa League of Cities Board President

Chelsea Hoye, Director of Government Affairs

It's Real: Property Tax Changes Already Causing Significant Local Impacts

Mickey Shields, Deputy Director for the Iowa League of Cities. He can be reached at (515) 244-7282 or mickeyshields@iowaleague.org.



The message is clear: Recent property tax changes enacted by the Iowa Legislature are directly impacting city budgets. Municipal officials across the state—from big cities to small towns—are discussing budget shortfalls, restrictions on revenue growth, and how to make ends meet amid new financial pressures.

Much of the concern stems from House File 718 (HF 718), enacted in 2023 as a major overhaul of the property tax system. Full details on the legislation, along with a subsequent bill approved last year, can be found at www.iowaleague.org.

One key aspect was the elimination of several levies that cities could use for specific purposes, including some approved locally by voters. The bill also created a new Combined General Fund Levy (CGFL), replacing the standard General Fund Levy—often referred to as the “8-10” in reference to the \$8.10 levy applied to each \$1,000 of taxable valuation. The CGFL can be automatically reduced if a city’s non-Tax Increment Finance property valuation exceeds certain annual growth thresholds.

Before HF 718, city governments and residents could include additional levies that contributed to the general fund, helping pay for community programs, projects, and services. Many city councils utilized these levies—some approved by voters—resulting in an effective general fund levy exceeding \$8.10. With most of those levies eliminated

and the CGFL potentially reduced in a given year, many cities could see their levy pushed downward. Furthermore, HF 718 applies for the next three fiscal years before imposing a hard CGFL cap of \$8.10 beginning in Fiscal Year 2029.

While the legislation includes several other key provisions, along with more recent bills affecting the property tax system, these elements have already led to many cities experiencing revenue shortfalls that do not keep pace with expenditures necessary to meet service demands.

Downward Revenue Pressures

Perhaps the most visible financial impact of the recent property tax legislation can be seen in Des Moines, where officials recently announced a \$17 million shortfall for the next fiscal year. The shortfall is due to reductions in property tax revenue growth combined with rising costs for services and materials. As City Manager Scott Sanders said in a press release, officials will have to make difficult choices. “This budget presents an enormous challenge and many tough decisions.”



In Coralville, City Administrator Kelly Hayworth, quoted by KCRG, highlighted the city's struggles with HF 718. "This year we don't have enough property tax growth just to take inflationary things into account." This underscores a critical issue: The cost of doing business continues to rise, and while that is a persistent challenge, it has been exacerbated under HF 718 and its revenue restrictions.

Tough Choices Abound

To balance budgets while minimizing impacts on daily services, city officials are exploring difficult financial decisions. Some plan to leave positions unfilled, while others will strategically use fund reserves or consider taking on more debt to finance necessary infrastructure projects. None of these options are ideal, nor are they sustainable long-term, but under HF 718, they remain on the table for many cities.

Another area under scrutiny is financial support for local partners, such as convention and visitors bureaus, economic development groups, and nonprofit organizations that provide public services. The city of Indianola, for example, decided to drop its membership in Catch Des Moines, the area's convention and visitors bureau. Other metro communities have also announced plans to withdraw from regional organizations that support public transit and public art.

These partnerships have long been a cost-effective way for cities to enhance public services and economic development initiatives without bearing the full burden of funding and staffing them internally. However, as the impacts of HF 718 ripple through local governments, some collaborations may no longer be financially viable. **»**

Need help with a complex city issue?

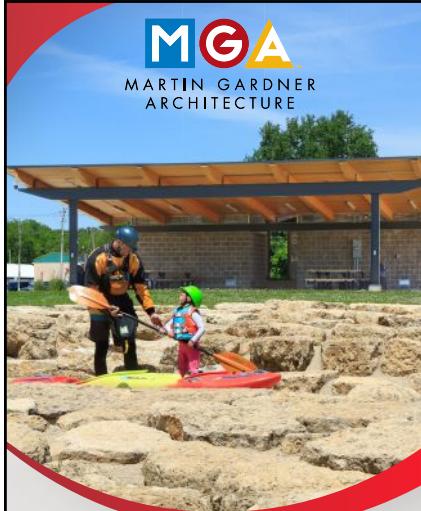
Have a legislative question or need an explanation on a new piece of legislation?

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The League is available to help answer your questions and provide assistance on a wide range of municipal issues.

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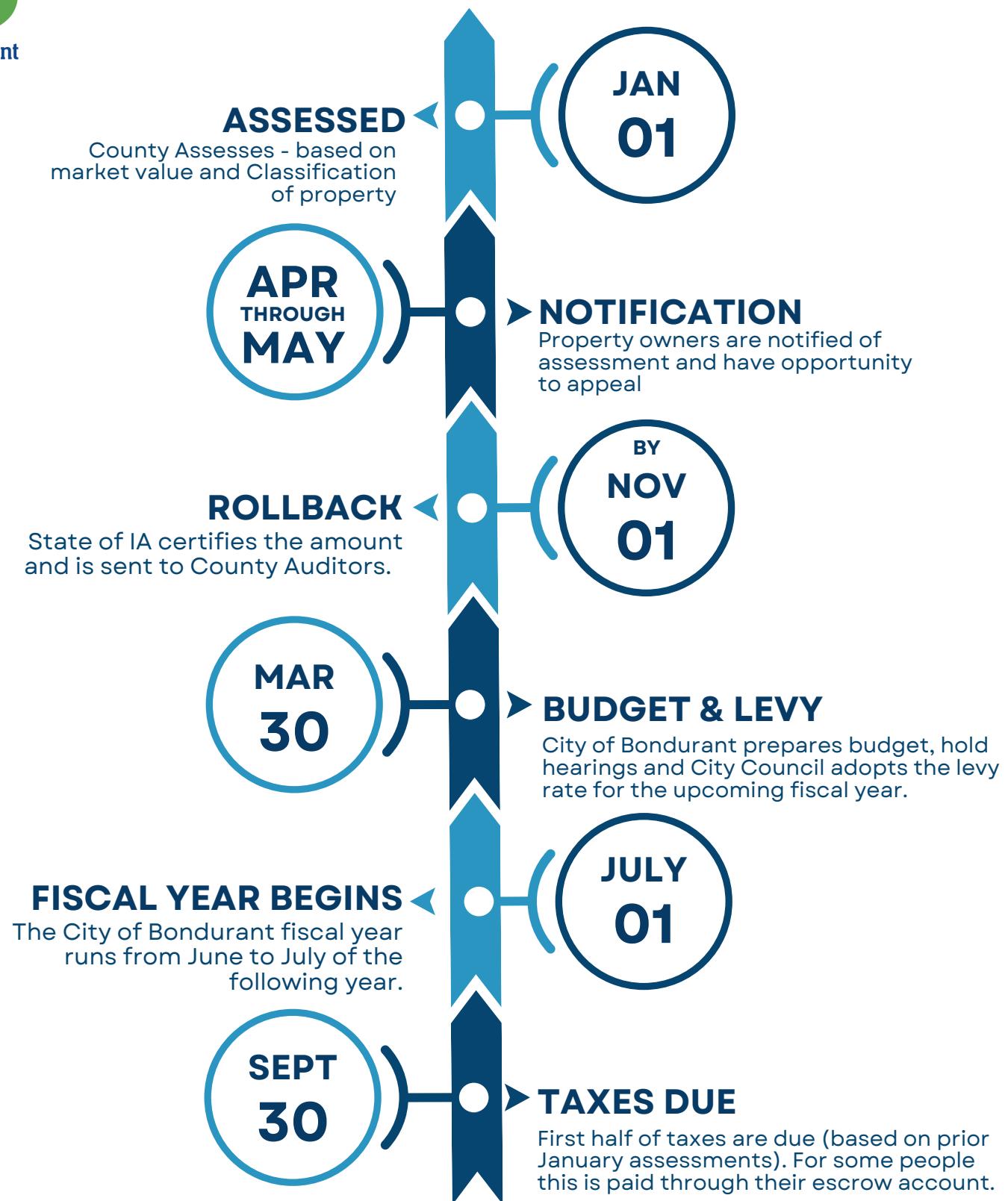
Property Tax Basics



Bondurant
Life Connecting



The Property Tax Timeline

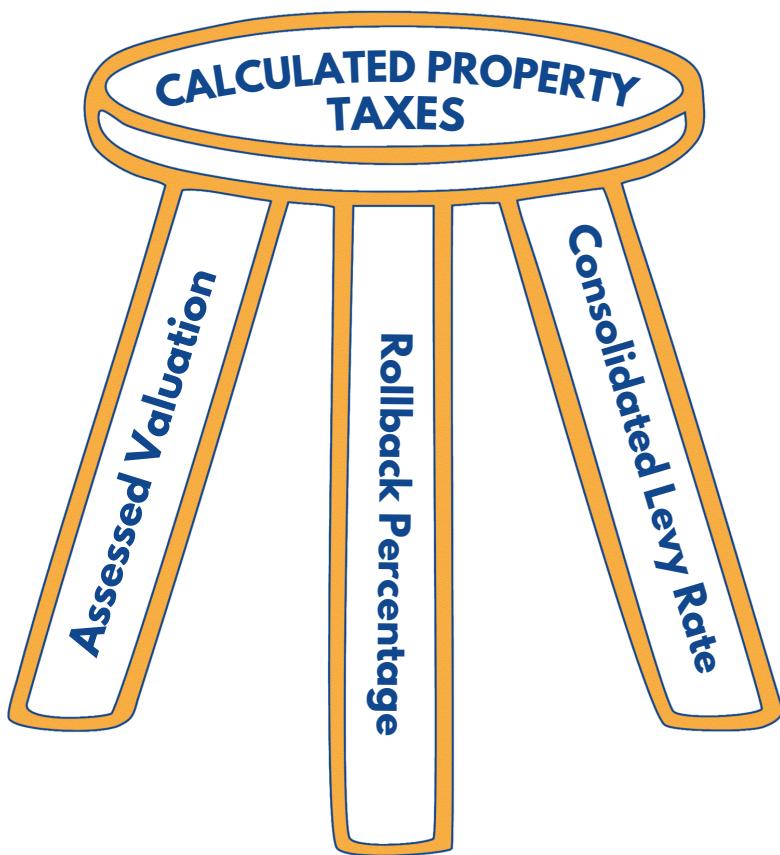


A **property tax levy** is the total amount of money to be raised from the property tax, as set forth in the budget for the local government or tax jurisdiction.

The State General Fund Levy Rate is \$8.10/\$1k of valuation. The constitutional debt limit is 5% of 100% valuation.



How are these calculated?



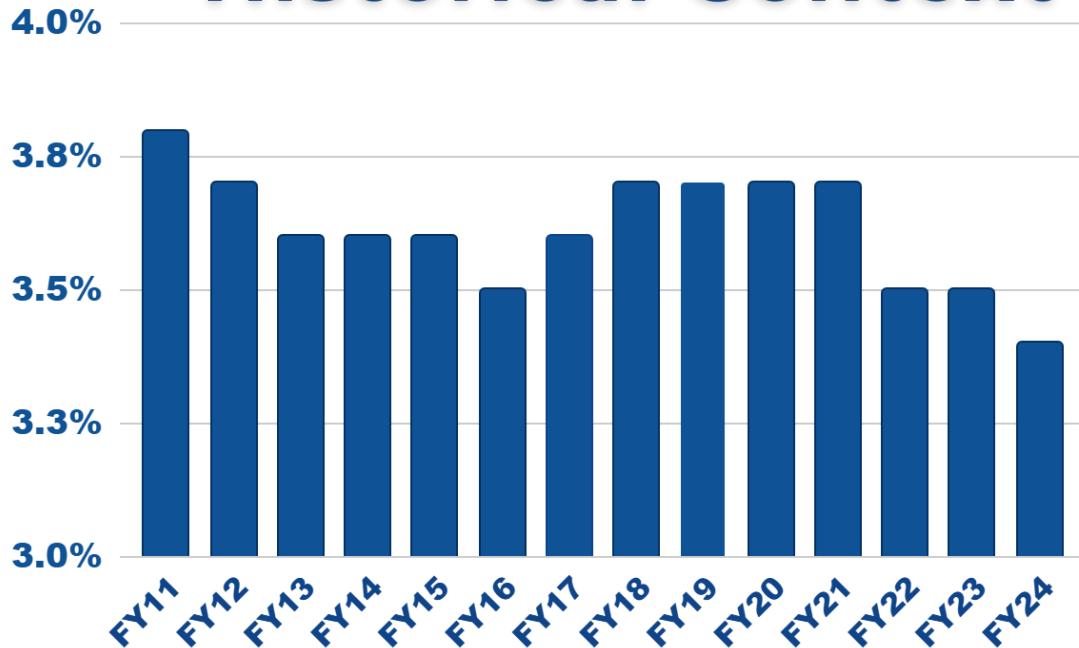
Assessed Valuation:

In Iowa, property is assessed by local county assessors, and the assessed value is used to determine property taxes. The Iowa Department of Revenue may apply a **rollback percentage** to adjust taxable value, affecting the final amount owed in property taxes.

Consolidated Levy Rate:

Sometimes referred to as the "millage rate", this is the total property tax rate applied to a property, combining the rates from multiple taxing authorities: City of Bondurant, Polk County, Bondurant-Farrar Community School District, Broadlawns Hospital, DART, and the State of Iowa.

Historical Context

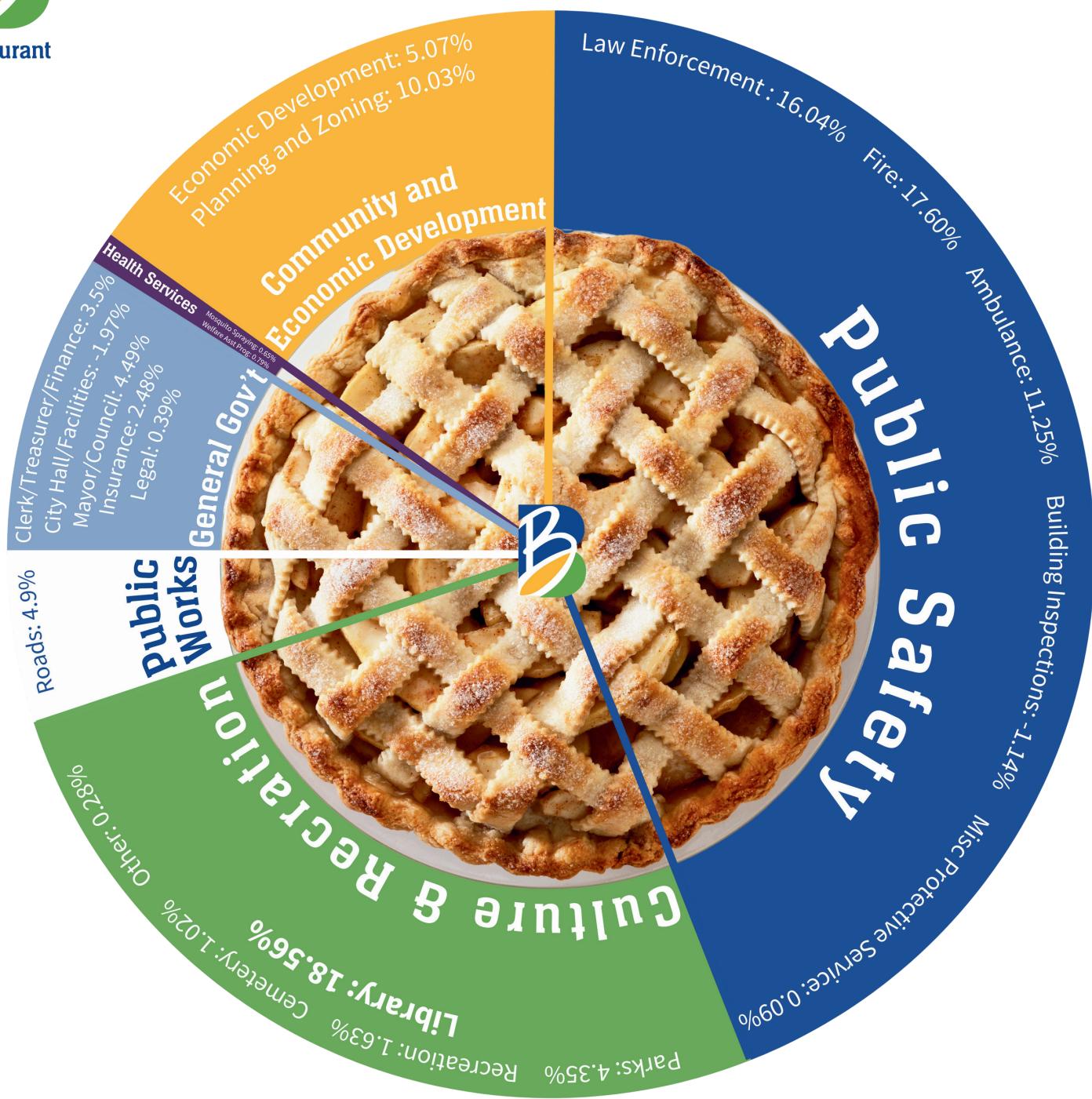


Property taxes in Iowa are at their lowest level compared to people's income.

Right now, property taxes make up 3.4% of personal income, which is lower than the national average of 3.9%.



What do my City taxes fund?



Some Examples include...

City Park Improvements

Trail Maintenance and Improvements

Enhanced Fire/EMS Protection

Longer Library Hours



Property Taxes Q & A

Question: Does an increase in my assessed valuation mean I will pay more taxes?

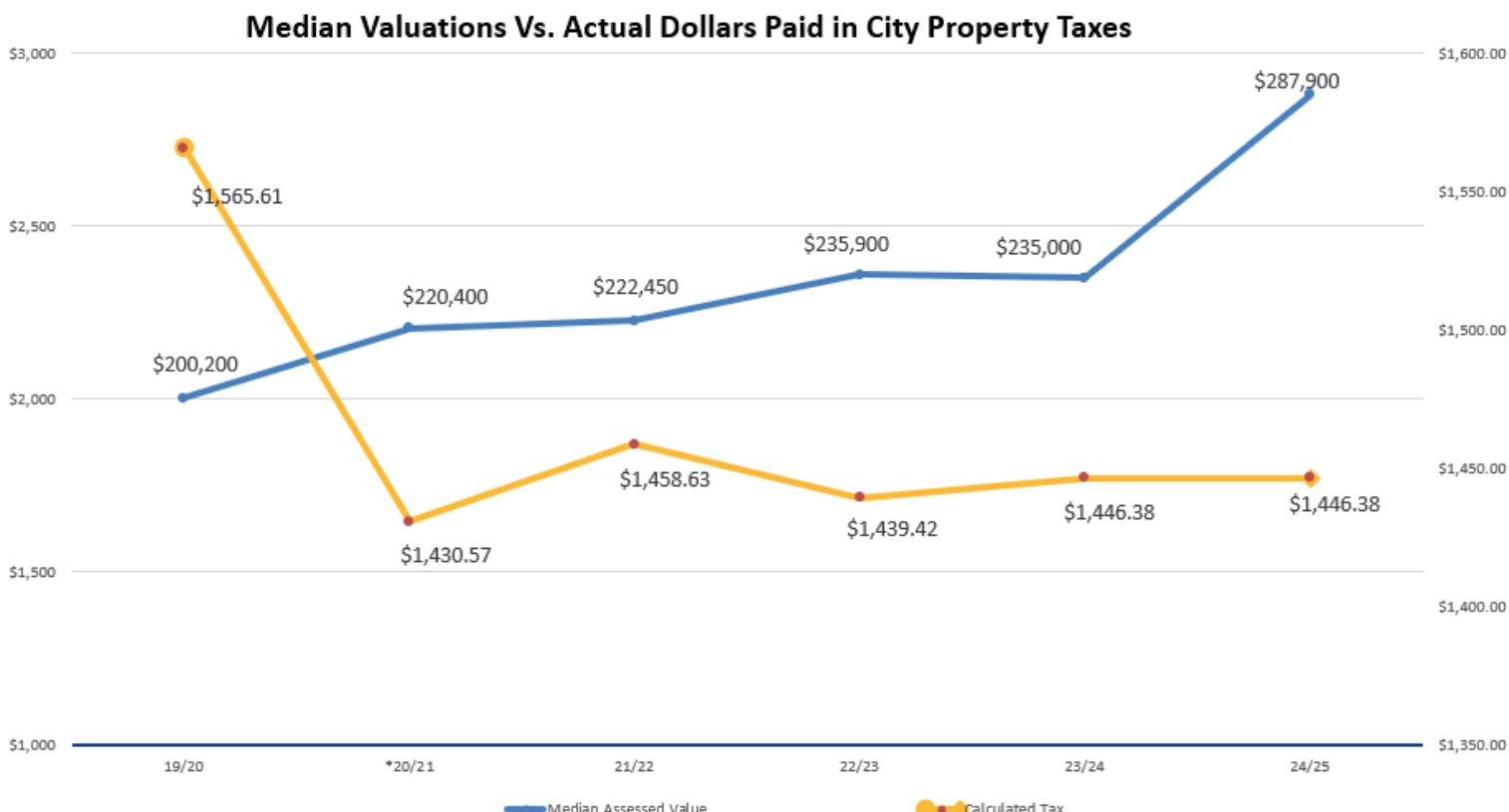
Answer: No, your taxes are determined by using your **taxable valuation**, not your assessed valuation. The **rollback percentage** is applied to your assessed valuation, which results in a lower taxable valuation.

As you can see below, the taxable valuation increased by over 20%, while the actual **City of Bondurant property taxes paid saw no change**.

Calculated Tax Based on Average Valuation

	<u>2023/2024</u>	<u>2024/2025</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>
Median Assessed Value	\$235,000	\$287,900	22.51%
Rollback Percentage	54.65010%	46.34280%	
Taxable Value	\$128,428	\$133,421	
City Tax Rate per \$1000	\$11.26219	\$10.84075	
Calculated City Property Tax	\$1,446.38	\$1,446.38	0.00%

*Please note that these are simple calculations that do not take into account exemptions and credits for individual circumstances.

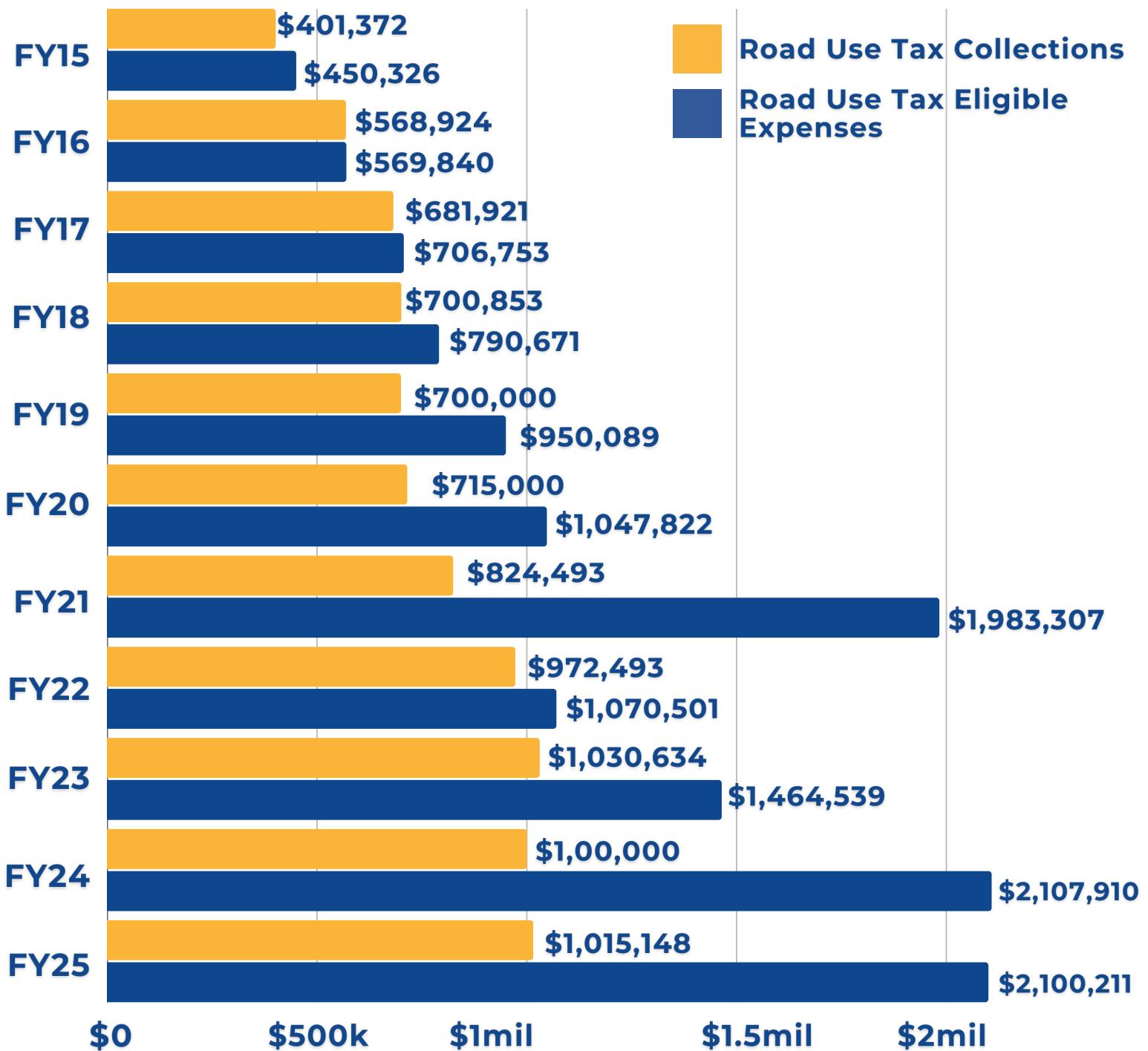


The graph above shows how the City of Bondurant has been diligent about keeping property stable or lowering them.



Property Taxes Q & A

Question: Why are property tax dollars spent on Public Works operations? Are those supported by Road Use Taxes that I pay at the gas pump?



Answer: Public Works operations are supported by the Road Use Tax, but there is not enough to fully fund the eligible expenses, as the graph shows.



Property Taxes Q & A

Question: How am I insulated from increases in property taxes?

Answer: There are multiple ways in which you can lower your tax burden.

Understanding Property Tax Limits and Credits in Iowa

- **Limits on Tax Increases:** The state limits how much the taxable value of all homes and farms can grow each year. This growth is capped at **3%** to help keep taxes from rising too fast.
- **Appealing Property Values:** If you think your property's assessed value is too high, you have the right to **appeal**. First, you can go to the County Property Tax Appeals Board. If you're still unhappy with the decision, you can appeal again to the Iowa Property Assessment Appeal Board.
- **City Tax Limits:** Iowa cities have a cap of \$8.10 per \$1,000 of taxable value for their general funds. This rule has been in place **since the 1970s**, which limits how much cities can collect for everyday services like police, fire, and parks.
- **Debt Limits for Cities:** Cities can only borrow up to **5%** of their total property value. This rule keeps cities from taking on too much debt and helps control the amount of taxes needed for repaying loans.
- **Tax Credits for Seniors and Disabled Residents:** There are special tax credits available to help low-income seniors and disabled homeowners lower their property tax bills.
- **Who Sets Property Tax Rates?** Local government leaders—like City Council members, School Board members, and County Supervisors—decide on tax rates. They are **your neighbors**, and you elect them to represent your community.



Bondurant

Property Taxes Q & A

Question: Where can I find more information?

Answer: If you want to learn more about property taxes and the city budget, here are some helpful resources:

- **City of Bondurant Website:** www.cityofbondurant.com – Find budget details and other important city information.
- **City of Bondurant Transparency Page:** cleargov.com/iowa/polk/city/Bondurant – See how the city spends money and collects taxes.
- **Polk County Assessor's Website:** polkcountyiowa.gov/county-assessor/ – Look up your personal property tax information.

These websites can help you stay informed about your property taxes and where your money goes!



Bondurant
Life Connecting

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