



Understanding Boise's proposed 2020 budget

By Lindsay Atkinson • SMART Boise

In 2020, the city of Boise proposes to spend **\$764.7 million**.

Most of that money will come from you, your neighbors, and your fellow Boiseans. So let's talk about how your money ends up with the city, and how the government plans to spend your dollars.



You pay taxes to the city, in one way or another. The city collects property taxes, sales taxes, and liquor taxes from Boise businesses and residents.

For 2020, Boise will rake in over \$183 million from these taxes.



property taxes



sales tax



liquor tax



You pay fines and fees. The city charges hundreds of different fees, like for licensing your dog, running certain businesses (like a food truck or restaurant), parking at the airport, and more. You also pay fines for disobeying city regulations—think parking tickets. This adds up to millions more dollars residents like you will hand over to Boise in 2020.



You also pay federal taxes, which often end up back in city governments in the form of grants. The feds bestow grants to different city-run programs, thus contributing even more of your money to the city's budget.

What will you get in return for paying all these taxes and fees?

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You get unnecessary growth of city departments. Boise has 15 major city departments, and spends hundreds of millions of dollars to operate these departments each year. Your money pays the salaries of over 1,800 city employees. Your dollars also pay for city department-run projects, like traffic box art and an artist-in-residency house.

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Additionally, you get a city government that constantly seeks big-budget projects, like the over-budget new library and a pricey sports park. 2020's major project will be the \$37 million Boise Airport expansion, funded by airline and passenger fees. Other projects include over \$200,000 to preserve the historic Hayman House, \$400,000 to study whether fire stations need to be remodeled, and \$1 million to add grass to Bowler Park.

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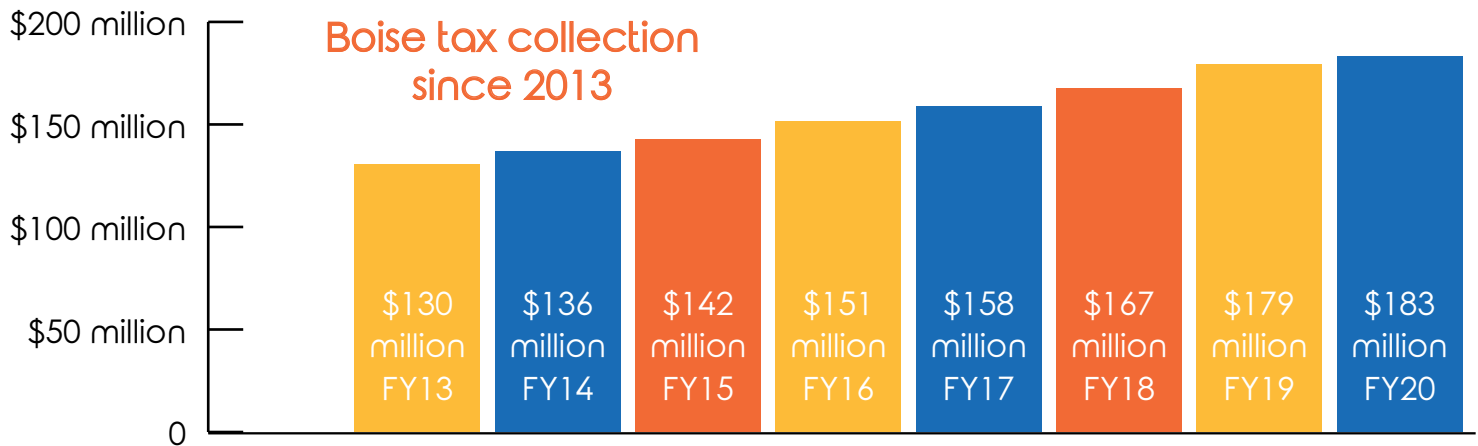
You also get some money specially set aside for recurring projects, like those that deal with solid waste disposal, water renewal, debt services, and more.

How does next year look for your taxes?

If you prefer your money to stay in your pocket, the forecast isn't bright.

In order to get the most money out of Boiseans, the city committed to raise property taxes by 3% each year—the maximum allowed by law—for the foreseeable future. In 2020, Boise will collect \$571 per every \$100,000 of taxable property, meaning the city increased property taxes for the average property by more than \$100 since last year.

In the past 7 years, Boise has increased tax collection by about \$50 million, and it is only set to grow.



To take even more money from you, Boise increases most of its service fees almost yearly. Combined with increased taxation, Boise has spiked its budget by a massive \$200 million over the last five years. Back in 2016, the city's budget was \$514.9 million. For 2020, it is proposed to be \$764.7 million.

So it's no surprise that many Boise residents question whether they can afford to stay in their homes with the rising cost of taxation and fees in the city to support these big budgets.

Do you feel like Boise collects and spends your money wisely? Or are you one of the residents experiencing trouble keeping up with these tax increases?

Make your voice heard on July 16 at the city's budget hearing.