

# City to trim another \$1M

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Budget

The city of Santa Cruz, which has already cut more than \$3 million in spending and 35 jobs over the past year-and-a-half, is poised to chop \$1 million

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more by late summer.

Specifics on what will be cut are expected at a May 27 budget meeting of the City Council's advisory budget crisis subcommittee at 3 p.m. at City Hall.

The city is facing a budget deficit of more than \$1.5 million.

Councilman Scott Kennedy, on the advisory committee, said public safety may be cut 2 percent but other departments could face 15 percent cuts. He said social services, already scaled

back in a previous round of cuts, could face another 6.1 percent cut, meaning more than \$100,000.

Kennedy said public safety is much harder to cut than other departments. He said any significant reduction of the fire department's budget would force the city to close one of its three fire stations. "We're not prepared to do that."

However, he insisted the June budget "is not going to be a disaster. We still have another round (of cuts) to do ... next year. That's the disaster. Until we find out what the state plans to do, we've only dodged the first bullet."

He predicted that unless revenues go up, there could be another \$1.5 million cut next year.

The city's general-fund budget is about \$48 million. Personnel director Erwin Young said the city trimmed

about \$2 million from it by cutting 30 jobs over the past year, reducing its work staff from 491 to 46.

City Manager Dick Wilson said the city is now down about 40 positions compared to 2000, and eventually "we may be down twice that many."

He declined to go into details about reductions or layoffs. "I could but I'm just not going to," he said. "We need to talk to the people first. I don't want people to read it in the paper first."

Mayor Emily Reilly said the city will try to minimize layoffs.

Of 30 jobs lost, there were two layoffs over the past year, including a staff adviser to the recently disbanded Citizens Police Review Board and an associate planner in the parks department.

"We're trying to cut back through consolidations, to do everything we can

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through efficiency measures," said Finance Director Dave Culver.

He cautioned not to expect too much new information at the May 27 meeting, "but you will at least get a sense of which departments will share in how much of the cuts."

The city chopped \$1.9 million last year, and another \$1 million earlier this year, but is still dealing with a budget deficit of more than \$1.5 million.

The economy, and consequent setbacks to the city's manufacturing base and drop in hotel-tax revenues, contributed to the latest problem, along with expectations that payments to the city's public employee retirement fund will skyrocket over the next few years.

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