



Comprehensive Finance Management Policies

Overview

Purpose

The Comprehensive Financial Management Policies assembles all of the City's financial policies in one document. They are the tools used to ensure that the City is financially able to meet its immediate and long-term service objectives. The individual policies contained herein serve as guidelines for both the financial planning and internal financial management of the City.

The City of Bellevue is accountable to its citizens for the use of public dollars. Municipal resources must be wisely used to ensure adequate funding for the services, public facilities, and infrastructure necessary to meet the community's present and future needs. These policies safeguard the fiscal stability required to achieve the City's goals and objectives.

Objectives

In order to achieve its purpose, the Comprehensive Financial Management Policies has the following objectives for the City's fiscal performance.

- A. To guide City Council and management policy decisions that has significant fiscal impact.
- B. To set forth operating principles that minimizes the cost of government and financial risk.
- C. To employ balanced and fair revenue policies that provides adequate funding for desired programs.
- D. To maintain appropriate financial capacity for present and future needs.
- E. To promote sound financial management by providing accurate and timely information on the City's financial condition.
- F. To protect the City's credit rating and provide for adequate resources to meet the provisions of the City's debt obligations on all municipal debt.
- G. To ensure the legal use of financial resources through an effective system of internal controls.
- H. To promote cooperation and coordination with other governments and the private sector in the financing and delivery of services.

Significant Changes

The development of the biennial budget provides the opportunity to review the City's Comprehensive Financial Management Policies and make necessary adjustments due to new or revised City ordinances and policies, State laws, or recommendations made by national accreditation and/or approval authorities. No significant changes for this budget period.



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I. Financial Planning Policies

The City shall develop and maintain a six-year Financial Forecast that estimates resource and expenditure behavior for the two bienniums beyond the current budget period. This Forecast will provide the City's decision-makers with an indication of the long-term fiscal impact of current policies and budget decisions. This planning tool must recognize the effects of economic cycles on the demand for services and the City's resources. To this end, the Forecast should differentiate between revenue associated with one-time economic activities and revenues derived as a result of base economic growth. City financial planning should ensure the delivery of needed services (many of which become more critical during economic downturns) by assuring adequate reliance on ongoing resources in order to support continued City services during economic downturns.

The City is a major force in a complex regional economic system. The City must understand and anticipate changes in both regional and national economic trends in order to engage in strategic financial and management planning.

A. General Fund:

1. The Finance Department will prepare and maintain a Financial Forecast for General Fund operations based on current service levels and current funding sources. This forecast will include the upcoming biennium as well as the two bienniums beyond the current period (a total of six forecast years). This future-oriented look will provide insight into whether the current mix and level of resources are likely to continue to be sufficient to cover current service levels. The forecast also allows staff and City Council to test various "what-if" scenarios and examine the fiscal impact on future bienniums.
2. The City will constantly test both its planning methodology and use of planning tools in order to provide information that is timely, accurate, and widely disseminated to users throughout the City.
3. Departments will forecast and monitor their respective revenues and expenditures with assistance from the Finance Department. The Finance Department will assist departments in developing appropriate systems for such monitoring and will retain overall fiscal oversight responsibility for the General Fund.
4. The Financial Forecast is updated at least two times each year. Any unexpected changes in economic conditions or other circumstances may prompt more frequent updates. Any significant changes are reported to the Leadership Team, City Manager, and Council.

B. Utility Funds:

1. Financial forecasting will be done for the three Utility Funds in a manner similar to the General Fund. The purpose of these forecasts will be to allow the City Council and citizens to evaluate the longer-term financial needs of these programs.
2. The forecasts should rely on the same basic economic assumptions as the General Fund Forecast. These forecasts will also identify other assumptions used in their preparation and the risks associated with them.
3. The forecasts must identify how they will impact rate structures.



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- C. Parks Enterprise Fund:
 - 1. Financial forecasting will be done for the Parks Enterprise Fund in a manner similar to the General Fund. The purpose of this forecast will be to allow the City Council and citizens to evaluate the longer-term financial needs of the funds' programs.
 - 2. The forecasts should rely on the same basic economic assumptions as the General Fund Forecast. This forecast will also identify other assumptions used and the risks associated with them.
- D. Development Services Fund:
 - 1. Financial forecasting will be done for the Development Services Fund in a manner similar to the General Fund. The purpose of this forecast will be to allow the City Council and citizens to evaluate the longer-term financial needs of the funds' programs.
 - 2. The forecasts should rely on the same basic economic assumptions as the General Fund Forecast. This forecast will also identify other assumptions used and the risks associated with them.
- E. Resource/Expenditure Estimating: The financial planning and subsequent budgeting for all funds will be based on the following principles:
 - 1. Resource and expenditure estimates should be prepared on a realistic basis with a target of ± 2 percent variance from the estimate for resources and ± 1 percent variance for expenditures.
 - 2. Expenditure estimates should anticipate contingencies that are reasonably predictable.

II. General Budget Policies

- A. Resources Greater than Budget Estimates: Resources (fund balance) greater than budget estimates in any internal service fund shall be refunded to the contributing funds unless circumstances warrant retaining such monies for future expenditure in the current fund.
- B. Budget Preparation: Department directors have primary responsibility for formulating budget proposals in line with City Council, Leadership Team, and City Manager priority direction, and for implementing them once they are approved.

The Finance Department is responsible for coordinating the overall preparation and administration of the City's biennial budget and Capital Investment Program Plan. This function is fulfilled in compliance with applicable State of Washington statutes governing local government budgeting practices.

The Finance Department assists department staff in identifying budget problems, formulating solutions and alternatives, and implementing any necessary corrective actions.
- C. Public Hearings: The City Council will hold three public hearings on the budget. The first two will be held sufficiently early in the budget process to allow citizens to influence budget decisions and to allow the Council to indicate special priorities before City staff develops a preliminary budget recommendation. The third and final public hearing will be held shortly after the preliminary budget's initial presentation to



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- the Council and before the Council's final budget deliberations. The final public hearing will be held prior to the time the Council fixes the annual Property Tax levy. If deemed necessary, additional public hearings may be conducted.
- D. **Overhead and Full Cost Allocation:** Department budgets should be prepared in a manner to reflect the full cost of providing services.
 - E. **Examination of Existing Base Budget:** During each biennial budget development process, the existing base budget will be thoroughly examined to assure removal or reduction of any services that could be eliminated or reduced in cost.
 - F. **Services to Keep Pace With Needs of Community:** The City will strive to ensure that City service priorities keep pace with the dynamic needs of the community by incorporating a service needs review as part of the budget process.
 - G. **Maintenance of Quality Service Programs:** Quality service programs will be offered by the City of Bellevue. If expenditure reductions are necessary, service elimination is preferable to poor or marginal quality programs.
 - H. **Maintenance of Existing Services vs. Additional or Enhanced Service Needs:** Significant annual resource allocations needed to maintain existing service quality will compete directly with investment proposals during the budget evaluation process.
 - I. **Budget Monitoring:** The Finance Department will maintain a system for monitoring the City's budget performance. This system will provide the City Council with quarterly presentations to Council regarding fund level resource collections and department level expenditures. Included will be provisions for amending the budget during the year in order to address unanticipated needs, emergencies, or compliance with State of Washington budgetary statutes. Budget amendments requiring City Council approval will occur through a process coordinated by the Finance Department. Significant financial issues that need to be addressed between regular monitoring reports will be provided to Council as warranted.
 - J. **Performance Budgeting:** Performance measures will be utilized and reported in department budgets. The City will prepare trends, comparisons to other cities, and other financial management tools to monitor and improve service delivery in City programs.
 - K. **Interfund Charges Based on Full Cost:** Interfund charges will be based on recovery of the full costs associated with providing those services. Internal Service Agreements shall be established between vendor and client departments reflecting full cost recovery unless special circumstances exist. Any disputes will be brought to the City Manager or Deputy City Manager for resolution after thorough evaluation by the Finance Department.
 - L. **Outcome Based Budget Presentation Format:** The focus of the City's biennial budget presentation is directed at displaying the City's services plan in Outcome areas to reflect the values of our community and important community-wide priorities recognized by the Council.
 - M. **Distinguished Budget Presentation:** The City will seek to obtain the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for each biennial budget. The Budget will be presented in a way that clearly communicates the budget to members of the public.



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III. Utility & Other Fund Budget Policies

- A. Utilities Department Financial Policies: The Utilities Department Financial Policies, including Solid Waste Reserves policies, were last updated in the 2007-2008 Budget. These policies have been included as Figure 10-1.
- B. Building Permit Revenues and Expenditures: Revenues derived from building permit fees shall be designated for the exclusive support of the development activities in the Development Services Fund. This fund will provide permit processing and compliance inspection services. Building permit fees shall include an overhead rate component to recover its share of general overhead costs, as well as department overhead from those departments directly involved in permit processing activities.
- C. Parks Enterprise Revenues and Expenditures: Revenues derived from golf and certain culture and recreation fees shall be designated for the exclusive support of activities in the Parks Enterprise Fund. This fund will maintain and operate the golf course, tennis center, and Robinswood House, administer adult athletic programs, pay approved maintenance services and overhead charges to the General Fund, and fund golf course improvements in the Capital Investment Program Fund. The Parks Enterprise Fund may also charge the General Fund for a portion of their programs that are offered with a "fee subsidy". This charge is designed to allow youth and special populations access to programs at less than full cost, to encourage participation.

IV. State-Mandated Budget Requirements

Washington State law (RCW 35A.34) specifies requirements that must be followed in budgeting each of the City's funds. The following summarizes the key areas covered in Washington State law:

- A. Key Requirements:
 - 1. The timing, process, and responsibility for each step.
 - 2. A standard account classification system prescribed by the State Auditor.
 - 3. Preparation and filing of a preliminary budget by the chief administrative officer.
 - 4. A "budget message" from the chief administrative officer explaining the content, financial policies, and major proposed changes.
 - 5. A public hearing on the proposed preliminary budget conducted before adoption of a final budget, which shall be held on or before the first Monday in December.
 - 6. Procedures for handling special situations such as mid-biennium emergencies.
 - 7. Limitations on the expenditure of City funds and procedures for amending the budget.
 - 8. Quarterly or more frequent reporting to the City's legislative authority on the revenue and expenditure status of each fund.
 - 9. Budgeting of non-operating/special purpose funds on a different basis from operating budget funds.



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- B. Fund Types: The City budgets all funds in accordance with the Optional Municipal Code, Section 35A.34 of the Revised Code of Washington, which is attached as Figure 10-2. In accordance with State law, the City prepares its biennial budget on an estimated cash receipts and disbursements basis and by a process that conforms to the stated timing requirements. The only exceptions are the following special purpose funds: special assessment (e.g., Local Improvement District (LID) Bond Fund) and custodial agency funds (e.g., Firemen’s Pension Fund), where the City acts in a custodial capacity as the bookkeeper for monies belonging to others. The City maintains three primary types of funds: operating, capital project and other special purpose funds.
1. Operating funds finance the continuous, traditional service delivery functions of a municipality in Washington State. Expenditure authority (appropriations) for each of these funds lapses at the end of each biennium, and a new budget must be adopted by the City Council.
 2. Capital project funds include the General and Utility Capital Investment Program Funds which provide for the City’s seven-year capital funding. Capital project fund budgets do not lapse at the end of the biennium, but are carried forward until the monies are fully expended or their objectives are accomplished or abandoned (RCW 35A.34.270).
 3. Special purpose funds are distinguished from operating/budgetary funds by their limited objectives and/or finite life spans. Special purpose fund budgets do not lapse at the end of the biennium, but are carried forward until the monies are fully expended or their objectives are accomplished or abandoned (RCW 35A.34.270). Examples of special purpose funds are the Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund, and the Housing Funds.

As required by State law, the 2013-2014 Budget reflects balanced expenditure and revenue estimates for each of the City’s funds. Although revenue estimates are made only at the fund level, expenditure budgets are prepared at the department and division level for the purpose of administrative control.

V. Budget Development Process

The Finance Department is responsible for coordinating the overall preparation of the City’s budgets. To accomplish this, staff issues budget instructions, conducts budget preparation training sessions, and communicates regularly with department staff. Their guidance provides the overall "rules of the game" within which the more detailed budget instructions and coordinating efforts are developed.

The following are the major provisions for a biennial budget in accordance with Section 35A.34 of the Revised Code of Washington.

Major Steps in Budget Preparation	State Law Time Limitations
1. Request by clerk to all department heads and those in charge of municipal offices to prepare detailed estimates of revenues and expenditures for the next biennium.	By second Monday in September.
2. Estimates are to be filed with the clerk.	By fourth Monday in September.



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<p>3. Estimates are presented to the city manager (CM) for modifications, revisions or additions. Clerk must submit to CM proposed preliminary budget setting forth the complete financial program, showing expenditures requested by each department and sources of revenue by which each such program is proposed to be financed.</p>	<p>On or before the first business day in the third month prior to beginning of the fiscal year.</p>
<p>4. CM provides the legislative body with current information on estimates of revenues from all sources as adopted in the budget for the current year. CM also provides the legislative body with the proposed preliminary budget setting forth the complete financial program, showing expenditures requested by each department and sources of revenue by which each such program is proposed to be financed.</p>	<p>No later than the first Monday in October.</p>
<p>5. The legislative body must hold a public hearing on revenue sources for the coming budget, including consideration of possible increases in property tax revenues. (Chapter 251, Laws of 1995, codified as RCW 84.55.120)</p>	<p>Before legislative body votes on property tax levy.</p>
<p>6. CM prepares preliminary budget and budget message and files with the legislative body and city clerk.</p>	<p>At least 60 days before the ensuing fiscal year.</p>
<p>7. Clerk publishes notice that preliminary budget has been filed and publishes notice of public hearing on final budget once a week for two consecutive weeks.</p>	<p>No later than the first two weeks in November.</p>
<p>8. Setting property tax levies</p>	<p>November 30</p>
<p>9. The legislative body, or a committee thereof, must schedule hearings on the budget or parts of the budget and may require the presence of department heads.</p>	<p>Prior to the final hearing.</p>
<p>10. Copies of proposed (preliminary) budget made available to the public.</p>	<p>No later than six weeks before January 1.</p>
<p>11. Final hearing on proposed budget.</p>	<p>On or before first Monday of December, and may be continued from day-to-day but no later than the 25th day prior to next fiscal biennium.</p>
<p>12. Adoption of Budget.</p>	<p>Following the public hearing and prior to beginning of the ensuing fiscal biennium.</p>
<p>13. Copies of final budget transmitted to the State Auditor's Office.</p>	<p>After adoption.</p>



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The following are key procedural steps in the City's budget development process. Note that the process and dates indicated below match the 2013-2014 process, and may be changed for future processes.

1. In early February, Council held a budget retreat and was provided an overview of the 2011-2012 adopted budget by outcomes and funds, overview of the 2011-2017 CIP, financing sources and uses, and a debt overview.
2. In February, Council validated the Outcome areas for the upcoming budget.
3. In April, the official "budget call" required by State law was made to all department directors or fund managers by the Budget Office as designees of the City Manager and Finance Director. Budget development instructions and other materials were provided to the departments at that time.
4. Early in the year, an operating and CIP budget survey was conducted. The survey reached a statistically valid sample of Bellevue residents and queried residents on a variety of City services, including how important and satisfied residents were with these services.
5. In late March, the top-line data from the Budget Survey was presented to the Result Teams. In April, the Budget Survey information was presented to the City Council.
6. Revenue and expenditure estimates were developed and updated by the Finance Department throughout the budget process. "Early Outlook" Financial Forecasts were prepared and presented to the Council in April.
7. In April, the Request for Results (RFR) were sent to departments. Departments prepared proposals in response to the RFRs and submitted to Results Teams (RTs).
8. The initial public hearing was held in May and a second public hearing was held in July to provide the public with ample opportunity to comment on recommended programs and/or ideas for new programs.
9. From late May to mid-July, RTs reviewed, ranked and provided feedback to departments regarding their proposals.
10. From mid-July to August, the Leadership Team reviewed the RTs recommendations and provided feedback.
11. In late September, the City Manager made final budget decisions and directed preparation of the preliminary budget.
12. During October, preliminary budget documents were prepared, printed, and filed with the City Clerk. This proposed budget was presented to the Council in late October, and copies were made available to the public immediately after the presentation.
13. Between late October and early December, the Council met in a series of budget sessions to review and discuss the proposed budget.



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14. The third and final public hearing was held in November during the time the Council discussed the preliminary budget. Citizens were able to comment on recommended programs and/or ideas for new programs at these public hearings.
15. In early December, the Council adopted the budget by ordinance and established the budget appropriation for the next biennium.
16. The final budget is published and distributed during the first half of the following year. Copies are made available to the public and are available on the City's website.
17. Quarterly monitoring reports are prepared by the Finance Department to report on actual performance compared to budget estimates and to identify any remedial actions that may be needed.
18. As required by State law, a mid-biennium update will occur during the year following adoption of the biennial budget. This update is required by state law and allows for budget modifications and technical adjustments.
19. The budget development process described above is supplemented by information generated by the City's Financial Forecast. The forecast is a financial tool that provides the City's decision-makers with an indication of the long-term fiscal impact of current policies and budget decisions.
20. The budget process is also supplemented by information on service delivery performance and benchmarking with discussions and publication of a Comparative Cities Performance Report and an Annual Performance Report.

VI. Budget Adjustment & Amendment Processes

Under the provisions of State law and the City's operating procedures, the operating budget may be adjusted or amended in two different ways. Adjustment of the budget involves a reallocation of existing appropriations and does not change the budget "bottom line". Amendment of the budget involves an addition to or reduction of existing appropriations.

- A. Adjustment: Under the first method, departmental expenditures and requirements are monitored throughout the year. Certain departments may develop the need for additional expenditure authority to cover unanticipated costs that cannot be absorbed within the budget, while other departments will not require their full budget authorizations. The Finance Department reviews and analyzes all department and/or fund budgets to determine what adjustments are necessary and whether the adjustments can be made within existing appropriation limits. These changes are then reviewed with the affected department and/or fund managers. When an adjustment is needed, Finance staff will look first to savings within the department; and then transfers between departments. No City Council action is needed as State law allows budget adjustments to be done administratively.
- B. Amendment: Amending the City's budget occurs whenever the requested changes from department and/or fund managers will cause the existing appropriation level for the fund to change. This situation generally occurs when the City Council authorizes additional appropriation. This is done by an ordinance that amends the original budget and states the sources of funding for the incremental appropriations.



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VII. Agenda Memorandum Review

The Finance Department will review all agenda items submitted for City Council action. The objective of these reviews will be to ensure compliance with the budget and disclosure of all fiscal issues to the Council. This information will be presented in the fiscal impact section of each agenda memorandum.

VIII. Revenue Policies

The City must be sensitive to the balance between the need for services and the City's ability to raise fees, charges, and taxes to support those services.

- A. **Mix of Revenues:** The City should strive to maintain a diversified mix of revenues in order to balance the sources of revenue amongst taxpayers and to provide ongoing stability and predictability.
 - 1. Property Taxes and other stable revenues provide a reliable base of revenues during periods of economic downturn.
 - 2. The City's overall revenue structure should be designed to recapture for the City some of the financial benefits resulting from City economic and community development investments.
 - 3. The City will strive to keep a total revenue mix that encourages growth, and keeps Bellevue economically competitive and a City of choice for people to live and do business.
- B. **Taxes Should Be Selected for Balance, Applicability, and Probable Economic Impact:** The following factors will be considered when the City's taxes are increased, decreased, extended, or changed in any way.
 - 1. Stability of the tax source over its expected life.
 - 2. Suitability for a pledge against future debt, if that is part of the City Council's long-range intent for the revenue source.
 - 3. Spread the tax burden throughout the City's tax base by utilizing a broad array of the tax sources available and by investigating mitigation of inequities and hardships where appropriate (e.g., Property Tax exemptions and deferrals, and utility tax rebates for low-income elderly people). State and local legislative remedies for detrimental tax impacts should be sought where appropriate.
 - 4. Apply the tax impact information for both residential and business taxpayers against a future vision of what the tax policy decision is intended to foster.
- C. **Property Tax Revenues for Park Maintenance:** Revenues derived from the Property Tax Lid Lift for Park Maintenance, which Bellevue voters approved in November 2008, shall be deposited in the General Fund to pay all costs necessary to fund the maintenance and operating costs of specific park facilities.
- D. **Charges for Services:** As much as is reasonably possible, City services that provide private benefit should be supported by fees and charges in order to provide maximum flexibility in use of general City taxes to meet the cost of services of broader public benefit. Charges for services that benefit specific users should recover full costs, including all direct costs, capital costs, department overhead, and Citywide overhead. Departments that impose fees or service charges should



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prepare and periodically update cost-of-service studies for such services. A subsidy of a portion of the costs for such services may be considered when consistent with legal requirements to meet other City interests and objectives, such as remaining competitive within the region.

- E. Backup Convention Center Financing: In accordance with Ordinance No. 4094 (passed on 12/4/89) and Ordinance No. 4229 (passed on 3/4/91), 0.01 percent of the City's total gross receipts business and occupation taxing authority of 0.2 percent, is reserved as a backup financing mechanism for the Convention Center should additional financing beyond that contemplated in the adopted Convention Center Financing Plan become necessary. In addition, any additional increase in the City's B&O Tax (measured by gross receipts) shall first require an analysis of the status of the Convention Center Financing Plan. This information must be included in any fiscal impact notes on agenda materials presented to the City Council for the purpose of increasing the B&O Tax rate described above. Ordinance Nos. 4094 and 4229 are attached as Figures 10-3 and 10-4.

IX. Operating Policies

The City should accommodate both one-time and ongoing expenditures within current resources, establish and adequately fund reserves, regularly monitor and report on budget performance, evaluate the fiscal impact of new proposals, operate as efficiently as possible, and constantly review City services for appropriateness and effectiveness.

- A. Expenditures Should be Within Current Resource Projections: Ongoing expenditures should be equal to or less than ongoing revenues. Each City fund budget must identify ongoing resources that at least match expected ongoing annual requirements. One-time resources and non-recurring ending fund balances will be applied to reserves or to fund one-time expenditures; they will not be used to fund ongoing programs.
- B. Unrestricted Resources Should Remain Unrestricted: Unless otherwise stated explicitly by the City Council, unrestricted resources will not be earmarked for specific purposes in the General Fund. This will preserve the ability of the Council to determine the best use of available resources to meet changing service requirements.
- C. Continual Improvement of Service Delivery: The City will seek to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of its services through Business Process Improvement (BPI) efforts, performance budgeting and measuring, and by assessing its services with comparable cities to reduce costs and improve service quality.
- D. Cash Management: The Finance Department will develop, maintain, and constantly seek to improve cash management systems which ensure the accurate and timely accounting, investment, and security of all cash assets. All cash received by City departments will be deposited with Finance within 24 hours of receipt.
- E. Cash Reserves: The City will maintain adequate cash reserves in order to reduce the potential need for borrowing or service reductions during periods of economic downturn, natural catastrophe, or for other, one-time extraordinary expenditures. Annually, the City will target 15 percent of General Fund revenues as a General Fund ending balance, commonly known as a reserve.
- F. Fund Balances: Accruals and non-cash enhancements to revenues will not be made as a means to influence fund balances at year-end or during budget discussions.



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- G. Fixed Asset Inventories: Accurate inventories of all physical assets (including roads infrastructure), their condition, life spans, and cost will be maintained to ensure proper stewardship of public property. The Finance Director will establish policies and appropriate procedures to manage fixed assets, including establishing the threshold dollar amount for which fixed asset records are maintained and how often physical inventories will be taken.
- H. Allocation of Overhead Costs: Overhead costs will be allocated to determine the full cost of providing services. Overhead costs will be allocated according to consistent methodology developed in consultation between the Finance Department and other operating departments.
- I. Utility Debt Coverage Ratio Target: The City Council adopted the following debt service coverage policy for the bonds issued by the City's Waterworks Utility on March 7, 1994 by Resolution No. 5759:

"The City Council will establish utility rates/charges and appropriations in a manner intended to achieve a debt service coverage ratio (adjusted by including City taxes as an expense item) of approximately 2.00. The City Council authorizes the Waterworks Utility to utilize this policy in development of pro forma projections which will be disseminated to the bond rating agencies and to the financial community generally."

X. Fund Description & Reserve Policies

Fund descriptions and reserve policies have been developed in a standard format for all City funds and are included in the 2013-2014 Budget Detail volume.

- A. Fund Descriptions include the following:
 - 1. Fund Type
 - 2. Fund Description
 - 3. Year Created
 - 4. Major Revenue Sources
 - 5. Major Expenditures
 - 6. Fund Custodian
 - 7. Reserve Policy
 - 8. Other Notes
- B. Reserve Policies include the following:
 - 1. Budgeting for Reserves: The City will maintain and justify budgeted reserves.
 - 2. Expenditure of Budgeted Reserves: Reserves included in the operating budget shall not be expended without the express written approval of the Finance Director.



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3. Annually the City will target 15 percent of General Fund revenues as a General Fund ending balance. This balance is to protect the City's essential service programs during periods of economic downturn, which may temporarily reduce actual resources or cut the growth rate of City resources below that necessary to maintain pre-existing service levels. Additionally, the ending fund balance, commonly known as a reserve, can be used in the event of a natural catastrophe, counter cyclical basic revenue growth (Property, Sales, and B & O Taxes combined) below 5 percent for the biennium, or because of unfunded federal or state mandates.
4. The target of 15 percent of annual General Fund revenues as a General Fund reserve shall be sufficient to maintain the City's exceptional bond rating for both its unlimited and limited general obligation tax bonds.

XI. Capital Investment Program Plan Policies

A number of important policy considerations are the basis for the Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan. These policies provide guidelines for all financial aspects of the CIP, and ultimately affect the project selection process.

- A. Relationship of Long-Range Plans to the CIP Plan: Virtually all of the projects included in the CIP are based upon formal long-range plans that have been adopted by the City Council. This ensures that the City's Capital Investment Program, which is the embodiment of the recommendations of these individual planning studies, is responsive to the officially stated direction of the City Council as contained in the Comprehensive Plan and supporting documents. Examples of these supporting documents are: Transportation Facility Plans (Central Business District (CBD), Bellevue-Redmond Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS), East Bellevue Transportation Study (EBTS), Newcastle), the Parks and Open Space Plan, the Municipal Facilities Plan, the Fire Master Plan, the CBD Implementation Plan and the Comprehensive Plans of the Water, Sewer, and Storm & Surface Water Utilities. There are exceptions, but they are relatively small when compared to the other major areas of expenditure noted above. These exceptions include activities such as the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) and the Community Development Program.
- B. Establishing CIP Priorities: The City uses the following basic CIP project prioritization and selection process.
 1. Each CIP program area establishes criteria to be used in the prioritization of specific projects submitted for funding. These specific criteria are developed in conjunction with City Council priorities and input from citizens and associated City boards and commissions (if applicable). The criteria established for this CIP are displayed in the 2013-2019 CIP Plan document in the tab titled "CIP Project Prioritization Criteria".
 2. The Finance Department determines revenue projections available to the non-utility CIP in consultation with various revenue-generating departments and the amount of resources available for new projects for each new seven-year Plan.
 3. The Budget Finance Department, CIP Review Panel and City Manager evaluate the various CIP projects and select those with the highest priority.



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4. Within the available funding, the highest priority projects are then selected and funded in the CIP.
 5. CIP program area managers recommend an expenditure plan to the Finance Department and City Manager, which includes all capital costs and any applicable maintenance and operations (M&O) and/or required short-term financing costs. Program area managers are responsible for the cost estimates of their proposed programs, including future M&O costs related to the implementation of completed projects.
 6. A Preliminary CIP Plan is recommended to the City Council by the City Manager along with the operating budget recommendations.
 7. The City Council reviews the Operating and Preliminary CIP Plan, holds a public hearing(s) to allow for citizen input, makes desired alterations, and then officially adopts the budget and establishes related appropriations as a part of the City's biennial budget process.
- C. Types of Projects Included in the CIP Plan: The CIP Plan will display, to the maximum extent possible, all major capital projects in which the City is involved. While the following criteria may be used as a general guide to distinguish which projects should be included or excluded from the CIP Plan, there are always exceptions which require management's judgment. For purposes of the CIP Plan, a CIP project is generally defined to be any project that possesses all of the following characteristics:
1. Exceeds a cost of \$100,000
 2. Involves:
 - a. Totally new physical construction,
 - b. Development of a major technology system (technology system is defined as "an integrated set of hardware, software and processes working cohesively to perform a business function")
 - c. Reconstruction designed to gradually and systematically replace an existing facility or system on a piecemeal basis,
 - d. Replacement of a major component of an existing facility or technology system, or
 - e. Acquisition of land or structures; and
 3. Involves City funding in whole or in part, or involves no City funds but is the City's responsibility for implementing, such as a 100 percent grant-funded project or 100 percent Local Improvement District funded project.

Eligible costs include:

 - a. Studies/plans that determine the feasibility and/or support the preliminary design of future CIP projects,

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- b. Pre-design, design, development, right-of-way, construction, inspection, and/or testing, and
 - c. Staff and consultants to deliver the capital project.
- D. Scoping and Costing Based on Predesign Study: It has proven difficult to develop accurate project scopes, cost estimates, and schedules on which no preliminary engineering or community contact work has been done. To address this problem, some projects are initially proposed and funded only for preliminary engineering and planning work. This funding will not provide any monies to develop final plans, specifications, and estimates to purchase rights-of-way or to construct the projects. However, generally, an estimated amount, sufficient to cover these costs based on a rough preliminary estimate is earmarked within the program area.
- E. Required Project Features and Financial Responsibility: If a proposed project will cause a direct impact on other publicly-owned facilities, an equitable shared and funded cost plan must be coordinated between the affected program areas.
- F. Predictability of Project Timing, Cost, and Scope: The predictability of timing and costs of projects is important to specific private developments, such as the provision of street improvements or the extension of major sewer lines or water supply, without which development could not occur. These projects generally involve significant financial contributions from such private development through impact fees, developer extension agreements, LIDs, and other means. Once a project has been approved by the City Council in the CIP, project scheduling is a priority to maintain.
- G. Local Improvement Districts (LID): This policy limits the use of LIDs to specific instances. Examples of when future LIDs may be formed are as follows: 1) where old agreements exist committing property owners to LID participation on future projects; 2) when current development activity or very recently past development activity has exempted these projects from the assessment of Transportation Impact Fees; 3) when a group of property owners wish to accelerate development of a certain improvement; 4) when a group of property owners desire a higher standard of improvement than the City's project contemplates; or 5) when a group of property owners request City assistance in LID formation to fund internal neighborhood transportation facilities improvements, which may or may not have City funding involved. If City funding is proposed by the project sponsors (property owners), they shall so request of the City Council (through the City Clerk) in writing before any LID promotion activity begins. The City Manager shall analyze such request within 45 days and report his conclusions and recommendation to Council for their consideration. The Council shall by motion affirm or deny the recommendation. The Council's affirmative motion to financially participate shall expire in 180 days, unless the project sponsors have submitted a sufficient LID petition by that time.

In the event the request is for street resurfacing in advance of the City's normal street resurfacing cycle, the City's contribution shall not exceed 50 percent of all project eligible costs.

On capital projects whose financing depends in part on an LID, interim financing will be issued to support the LID's portion of the project budget at the same time or in close proximity to the issuance of the construction contract. The amount of the interim financing shall be the current estimate of the final assessment roll as determined by the administering department.

- In the event that the project is 100 percent LID funded, interim financing shall be issued either in phases (i.e., design phase and construction phase) or up front in the amount of the entire estimated final assessment roll, whichever means is estimated to provide the lowest overall cost to the project as determined by the Finance Department.
- H. **Non-Utility CIP Maintenance and Operating (M&O) Costs:** Proposals for CIP project funding shall include the estimated future M&O cost, to provide full cost disclosure. Such M&O costs anticipated to be incurred in the upcoming biennium should be included in operating budget proposals for funding consideration. As of 2011, funding for existing CIP M&O is provided by a distribution of the City's Sales Tax revenue, split between 75 percent General Fund and 25 percent CIP. The dollar amount for CIP M&O is adjusted upward each year by the anticipated Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) after first making any necessary adjustments (e.g., partial vs full-year costs) and eliminating any one-time items. The distribution amounts should be reviewed periodically by Council for reasonableness and potential adjustment.
 - I. **Preserve Existing Capital Infrastructure Before Building New Facilities:** It is the City's policy to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to preserve the City's existing infrastructure before targeting resources to build new facilities that also have operating and maintenance obligations. This policy addresses the need to protect the City's historical investment in capital facilities and to avoid embarking on a facility enhancement program, which when coupled with the existing facilities requirements, the City cannot afford to adequately maintain.
 - J. **New Facilities Should Be of High Quality, Low Maintenance, Least Cost:** This policy has guided the development and execution of the CIP Plan through an emphasis on lowest life-cycle cost. Projects should only be built if the necessary funding to operate them is provided. Also, priority is given to new facilities that have minimal ongoing maintenance costs so as to limit the impact upon both the CIP and the operating budget.
 - K. **Public Input for Capital Projects:** The City makes a serious commitment to public involvement. All of the City's long-range plans have been developed through an extensive citizen involvement program. Citizen involvement occurs at the long-range plan development stage, during CIP review and adoption, during master planning processes, during design and construction of specific projects, and through public processes associated with City boards and commissions. Public hearings are held during the CIP Plan development process to allow the public to comment on the recommended projects. The projects themselves call for an extensive public outreach effort, allowing those most closely effected to influence the design of the projects. While public input is essential to the successful implementation of the CIP Plan, staff and Council must also remain conscious of the overall effect upon costs when responding to requests of project neighbors.
 - L. **Basis for Project Appropriations:** During the City Council's biennial CIP Plan review, the City Council will appropriate the estimated project costs for the biennium for all projects in the CIP Plan. Subsequent adjustments to appropriation levels for amendments to the CIP Plan may be made by the City Council at any time.



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- M. **Balanced CIP Plan:** The CIP Plan is a balanced seven-year plan. This means that for the entire seven-year period, revenues will be equal to project expenditures in the Plan. It is anticipated that the plan will have more expenditures than revenues in single years of the Plan, but this imbalance will be corrected through the use of interim financing as needed. However, over the life of the seven-year plan, all planned interim debt will be repaid and all Plan expenditures, including interest costs on interim debt will be provided for with identified revenues. Any project funding plan, in which debt is not retired within the current seven-year Plan, must have specific City Council approval.
- N. **Use of Debt in the CIP:** The CIP is viewed as a long-term program that will continually address capital requirements far into the future. As such, the use of long-term debt has been minimized, allowing the City to put money into actual projects that benefit Bellevue residents and businesses rather than into interest payments to financial institutions. To that end, this policy limits debt to short-term obligations, primarily for cash flow purposes. Debt incurred will be paid back before the end of the current CIP. Finance staff monitors CIP cash flow regularly and utilize fund balances to minimize the amount of borrowing required. Projected financing costs are included within a project in the General Government program area. There are exceptions to this policy for extraordinary circumstances, where Councilmanic or voted long-term debt have been issued to achieve major City goals that otherwise could not have been achieved, or would have been delayed an unacceptable amount of time.
- O. **Finance Director's Authority to Borrow:** The Finance Director is authorized to initiate interim and long-term borrowing measures, as they become necessary, as identified in the current CIP Plan.
- P. **CIP Plan Update and Amendment:** The CIP Plan will be updated at least biennially as a part of the City's biennial budget process. The City Council may amend the CIP Plan at any time if a decision must be made and action must be taken before the next CIP review period. The City Council has delegated authority to the City Manager to administratively approve CIP Plan adjustments, except for changes in project scope or changes that total more than 10 percent of a project's adopted CIP Plan budget (unless a 10 percent adjustment is less than \$10,000), or regardless of the percentage, budget changes totaling more than \$100,000. The Council has further authorized the City Manager to administratively approve the acceleration of project schedules so long as they can be accomplished without causing cash flow problems and with the understanding that any controversial issues would be brought before the City Council. All project additions or deletions must be approved by the City Council.
- Q. **Formalization of Monetary Agreements:** All agreements between the City and outside jurisdictions shall be in writing specifying the financial terms of the agreement, the length of the agreement, and the timing of any required payments. Formalization of these agreements will protect the City's interests. Program areas shall make every effort to promptly request any reimbursements that are due the City. Where revenues from outside jurisdictions are ongoing, these requests shall be made at least quarterly, unless alternative arrangements are approved by the City Manager or City Council.

- R. **Projected Grant Revenues:** At the Finance Director's discretion, grant-funded capital expenditures are budgeted prior to the specific grant award. City overhead or indirect costs for grant-funded programs will be included in all grant proposals, where permitted. With grant-funded capital acquisitions, the City will attempt to recover ongoing M&O costs, and replacement costs associated with the acquisition.
- S. **Projected Revenues from Future Land Sales:** The City recognizes that City-owned land is an asset that can be sold to finance CIP projects. With this in mind, the City shall cautiously allow land sale proceeds to be used as a funding source by program areas that have oversight responsibility for the land. The land shall be valued based on an appraisal performed either by the Transportation Department or an outside appraisal company. A conservative value shall be used to provide a cushion for economic shifts. The timing of the proceeds shall be estimated based on the length of time the property is likely to be on the market. However, if the land does not sell in a timely manner or its value turns out to be overestimated, then the program area must either reallocate revenue sources from other projects within its area, find an agreeable replacement funding source, or cease work on the project, if possible.
- T. **Land Sale Remnants:** The City is frequently left with property remnants following the completion of a project that required rights-of-way (ROW) acquisition. These remnants represent an asset to the program area that purchased them. If the project selling the land remnants is still active, the revenue from the sale shall be receipted as land sale proceeds in the project, therefore serving to partially offset the ROW acquisition costs. If the project is already completed at the time of the remnant sale, the land sale proceeds can either be used by the selling program area to help fund another of that program area's projects, or they can be deposited in the Land Purchase Revolving Fund for future use by the purchasing program area.
- U. **Applicable Project Charges:** CIP projects should reflect all costs that can be clearly shown to be necessary and applicable. Staff charges to CIP projects will be limited to time spent actually working on those projects and shall include an overhead factor to cover the applicable portion of that person's operating cost.

XII. Intergovernmental Revenues

Many service costs of the City are influenced by other governments, either because of service overlap or service mandates imposed by the county, state, or federal government. The City should take advantage of opportunities to enhance service delivery through intergovernmental cooperation, shared revenues, and grants while aggressively opposing mandates that distort local service priorities.

- A. **Grants Should Not Fund Ongoing Services:** The City will refrain from using grants to meet ongoing service delivery needs. In the City's financial planning, grants will be treated in the same manner as all other temporary and uncertain resources and will not be used to fund ongoing, basic service needs. With grant-funded capital acquisitions, the City will attempt to recover ongoing maintenance and operating costs, and replacement costs associated with the acquisition.
- B. **Grant Agreements Reviewed for Compliance with Regulations:** All grant agreements will be reviewed by the appropriate City staff, including Finance, City Attorney's Office, and sponsoring department, to ensure compliance with state, federal, and City regulations.



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- C. Budgeting for Grant Expenditures: At the City Manager’s discretion, grant-funded capital expenditures are budgeted prior to the specific grant award. City overhead or indirect costs for grant-funded programs will be included in all grant proposals, where permitted. With grant-funded capital acquisitions, the City will attempt to recover ongoing maintenance and operating costs, and replacement costs associated with the acquisition.
- D. Protecting the City’s Interests: The City will aggressively oppose state or federal actions that mandate expenditures that the City Council considers unnecessary. The City will pursue intergovernmental funding to support the incremental cost of those mandates.
- E. Intergovernmental Agreements: The City will work with other governments to identify the jurisdiction most capable and appropriate to provide specific public services. All intergovernmental agreements and contracts for service delivery will be brought forward to the City Council for approval.

XIII. Accounting, Auditing & Financial Reporting Policies

The City shall maintain a system of financial monitoring, control, and reporting for all operations and funds in order to provide effective means of ensuring that overall City goals and objectives are met.

- A. Accounting Records and Reporting: The City will maintain its accounting records in accordance with state and federal law and regulations. Budgetary reporting will be in accordance with the state’s budget laws and regulations. The City will report its financial condition and results of operations in accordance with state regulations and generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) applicable to governments.
- B. Auditing: The State Auditor will annually perform the City’s financial and compliance audit. Their opinions will be contained in the City’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Results of the annual audit shall be provided to the Council in a timely manner.
- C. Excellence in Financial Reporting: As an additional independent confirmation of the quality of the City’s financial reporting, the City will annually seek to obtain the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The CAFR will be presented in a way designed to communicate with citizens about the financial affairs of the City.
- D. Simplified Fund Structure: The City will minimize the number of funds. The funds will be categorized in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for reporting purposes, although some funds may be functional classifications but may also be referred to by City of Bellevue fund types.

XIV. Investment Policy

The City shall maintain a current investment policy. A copy is attached as Figure 10-5.

As an additional independent confirmation of the integrity of the City’s Investment Policy, the City’s policy has been certified by the Municipal Treasurers’ Association of the United States and Canada.



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XV. Debt Management Policy

The City shall maintain a current debt policy. A copy is attached as Figure 10-6.

XVI. Budget Ordinances

Budget Ordinances are attached as Figure 10-7.

- Ordinance 6083, Human Services Funding
- Ordinance 6084, Updating Development Services Fees
- Ordinance 6085, Water Rates and Charges
- Ordinance 6086, Sewer Rates and Charges
- Ordinance 6087, Storm and Surface Water Rates and Charges
- Ordinance 6088, 2013 Property Taxes
- Ordinance 6089, 2013-2014 Budget and 2013-2019 CIP Budget Adoption