

City of Shoreline

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I. FINANCIAL PLANNING POLICY

The City shall develop and maintain a 6-year financial forecast that estimates resource and expenditure behavior for the five years 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 policy 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.

II. GENERAL BUDGET POLICIES

These general budget policies are the basis on which staff develops budget recommendations and establishes funding priorities within the limited revenues the City has available to provide municipal services.

- A. No Operating Deficit: Current revenues will be sufficient to support current expenditures. Revenue estimates will be realistic and debt financing will not be used for current operating expenses.
- B. Resources Greater than Budget Estimates: Resources (fund balance) greater than budget estimates in any fund shall be considered "one-time" resources and shall not be used to fund ongoing service delivery programs.
- C. Budget Adoption Level: Budget adoption by the City Council shall be at fund level. Any changes in appropriations at fund level require City Council approval.
- D. Necessary to Implement City Council Goals Identified in Annual Workplan: The City Council identifies specific goals as part of its work-plan, and departmental budgets should include adequate resources to accomplish those goals in the expected timeframes.
- E. Public Safety Protection: Public safety is a top priority, and as such, unmet needs in this area should have a priority over other service areas.
- F. Degradation of Current Service Levels: When increased service demands are experienced over a sustained period of time, resources should be provided to prevent service level degradation below an acceptable level.
- G. Investments that are Primarily Funded by Additional Fees or Grants: Programs and investments that are funded through a dedicated revenue source (i.e., non-tax revenue), that meet the goals of the City Council, will receive priority consideration.
- H. Investments that Delay Future Cost Increases: When practical, resources should be allocated for selective preventative investments that can be made to avoid even larger costs in the future.
- I. Investments that Forestall Adding Permanent Staff: Recognizing that personnel related expenditures represent the largest portion of the City's budget, methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of City services through technology improvements should receive priority funding if it can forestall the addition of permanent staff.
- J. Commitments that can Reasonably be Maintained over the Long-Term: Funding for new programs and services in operating funds should be limited to the extent that they can be reasonably funded over the near-to-long-term given the current revenue stream.
- K. Overhead and Full Cost Allocation: Department budgets should be prepared in a manner to reflect the full cost of providing services.
- L. Maintenance of Quality Service Programs: The City of Shoreline will offer quality service programs. If expenditure reductions are necessary as a result of changing economic status, selective service elimination is preferable to poor or marginal quality programs that are caused by across the board cuts.

- M. Distinguished Budget Presentation: The City will seek to comply with the suggested criteria of the Government Finance Officers Association in producing a budget document that meets the Distinguished Budget Presentation program criteria as policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan, and as a communication device.

III. FORMULATION AND APPROVAL OF BUDGETS

In accordance with RCW 35A.33, departments shall be requested by the Finance Director to prepare detailed estimates of revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year by no later than the second Monday of September. Responses will be due by no later than the fourth Monday in September, and by no later than the first business day in October, the Finance Director will present to the City Manager a proposed preliminary budget setting forth the complete financial program, showing expenditures requested by each department and sources of revenue by which each program is proposed to be financed.

Although the schedule outlined above meets the requirements of the Revised Code of Washington, the Shoreline budget process usually follows an accelerated time schedule. The Finance Director typically requests departments to prepare their detailed estimates of revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year in July, with those responses due in August.

By no later than the first Monday in October, the City Manager will provide the City Council with current information on estimates of revenues from all sources as adopted in the budget for the current year. The City complies with this requirement by providing the City Council with a quarterly report and a comprehensive overview of the City's current financial position at a summer Budget Retreat.

The administration will analyze program priorities and needs and recommend funding levels for each program in a proposed operating budget and six-year capital improvement program, which will be submitted to the Council by no later than 60 days prior to the end of the fiscal year. The City Manager typically presents the proposed budget to the City Council in late October.

As part of the budget document, a budget message will be prepared that contains the following:

- An explanation of the budget document.
- An outline of the recommended financial policies and programs of the City for the ensuing fiscal year.
- A statement of the relation of the recommended appropriation to such policies and programs.
- A statement of the reason for salient changes from the previous year in appropriation and revenue items.
- An explanation of any recommended major changes in financial policy.

The operating budget proposal for the general fund will include a financial plan that shows projected revenues and expenditures for at least the next five fiscal years. The financial plan will provide an explanation of the assumptions used in projecting future year expenditure and revenue levels, such as growth in tax revenues, inflation, cost of services, and other factors that may impact the financial condition of the City.

The operating budget will be classified and segregated according to a standard classification of accounts as prescribed by the State Auditor.

The Council will hold public hearings as required and approve operating and capital budgets prior to the end of the fiscal year in accordance with State law.

IV. 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

The City departmental expenditures and program goals 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 may unexpectedly 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 and within the City Council and Departmental goals as provided in the budget. Necessary adjustments are then reviewed with the affected department and/or fund managers. When an adjustment is needed, the Finance staff will look first to savings within the department and then consider budget transfers between departments. The Finance Director, in conjunction with the Department Directors and the City Manager, reviews and decides if any specific budget reductions are needed. No City Council action is needed as State law allows budget adjustments to be done administratively and approved by the City Manager. As a matter of practice, staff will include any adjustments made between departments with the quarterly financial information provided to the City Council.

B. Amendment

Amending the City's budget occurs whenever the requested changes from departments and/or funds 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.

V. RESERVE AND CONTINGENCY FUND POLICIES

A. Contingency Reserve

It is the City's policy to maintain a contingency reserve in accordance with RCW 35A.33.040. The reserve will be available for unforeseen urgent or emergency needs. The contingency reserve is intended to provide for unanticipated expenditures or revenue shortfalls of a non-recurring nature. The maximum allowable amount in the contingency reserve is 37.5 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

B. Unreserved Fund Balance

It is the City's policy to maintain a unreserved balance in each of the operating funds of the City (i.e., General, City Streets) at a level sufficient to provide for cash flow needs, a reasonable amount for emergent or unforeseen needs, and an orderly adjustment to adverse changes in revenues, including termination of revenue sources through actions of other governmental bodies. The Finance Director, in conjunction with the departments and the City Manager, will analyze fund balance requirements and recommend formal fund balance policies for each of the principal City funds. Fund balance policies will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure all relevant factors are being considered. Until such time as a thorough analysis has been completed for each fund, the City's policy will be to provide a minimum fund balance (combination of Contingency Reserve and Unreserved Fund Balance) of at least 10% of budgeted operating revenues for the General Fund and a minimum unreserved fund balance of 5% of budgeted operating revenues for other City operating funds.

C. Budgeted Operating Contingency

In order to provide for unforeseen expenditures or new opportunities throughout the year, the General Fund budget will have an operating contingency of \$250,000 that will be used only with City Council approval. Savings within departmental budgets throughout the year will be the first source for funding unforeseen expenditures or providing for new opportunities before the Operating Contingency is accessed.

D. Budgeted Insurance Reserve

A separate insurance reserve account will be budgeted within the General Fund budget to be used for potential substantial events (street damage, inverse condemnation, etc.) and infrastructure repair not covered by insurance policies or other sources such as FEMA. The budgeted amount should approximate 2% of the City's assets (not including roads and surface water utilities).

E. Budgeted Capital Improvement Contingency

A separate capital contingency account will be budgeted within each of the three capital improvement funds to be used for capital project adjustments and for project acceleration. The amount to be budgeted in each of the capital contingency accounts is equal to 10% of the total budgeted capital improvement projects within each fund for that year or \$200,000, whichever is less.

The City Manager may administratively approve expenditures from the contingency fund for any project, without changing the project scope, regardless of the percentage of the project budget, if the amount does not exceed \$10,000. In addition, the City Council delegates the authority to the City Manager to administratively approve dollar adjustments to individual capital projects that do not change the scope of project in an amount up to 10% of the project's adopted budget, not to exceed \$50,000.

VI. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PLAN POLICIES

A number of important policy considerations are the basis for the Capital Improvement 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

The CIP will be updated annually as part of the City's budget process. The City Council may amend the CIP Plan at any time as required.

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 Improvement 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, Council work goals, and supporting documents. Examples of these supporting documents: Pavement Management System Plan and the Parks and Open Space and Recreation Services Plan. There are exceptions, but they are relatively small when compared to the other major areas of expenditure noted above.

B. CIP Coordination Team

A CIP Coordination Team is a cross-departmental team which participates in the review and recommendation of the CIP program to the City Manager. The Team will review proposed capital projects in regards to accurate costing (design, capital, and operating), congruence with City objectives, and prioritize projects by a set of deterministic criteria. The Public Works Director, or his/her designee, will serve as the lead for the team.

C. 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 by staff in conjunction with City Council priorities and input from citizens, associated City boards and commissions. The criteria is identified in the City's budget document. The City has divided its CIP projects into the following program areas: General & Parks Capital Projects, Roads Capital Projects, and Surface Water Capital Projects.
2. Designated personnel within City departments recommend project expenditure plans to the Public Works Department. The project expenditure plans include all capital costs and any applicable maintenance and operation expenditures along with a recommended funding source.
3. The CIP Coordination Team evaluates the various CIP projects and selects those with the highest priority based on input from citizens, project stakeholders, appropriate advisory committees, and City Council goals.
4. A Preliminary CIP Plan is developed by the Public Works Department and is recommended to the City Council by the City Manager along with the operating budget recommendations.
5. The City Council reviews the Operating and Preliminary CIP Plan, holds a public hearing(s) on the plan, makes their desired alterations, and then officially adopts the CIP and establishes related appropriations as a part of the City's budget.
6. Within the available funding, the highest priority projects are then selected and funded in the CIP.

D. 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. It is difficult to define precisely what characteristics a project should have before it is included in the CIP Plan for the public's and City Council's review and approval. While the following criteria may be used as a general guide to distinguish among projects which should be included or excluded from the CIP Plan, there are always exceptions which require management's judgment. Therefore, the City Manager has the administrative authority to determine which projects should be included in the CIP Plan and which projects are more appropriately contained in the City's operating budget.

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 an estimated cost of \$10,000;
2. Involves totally new physical construction, reconstruction designed to gradually and systematically replace an existing system on a piecemeal basis, replacement of a major component of an existing facility, or 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% grant-funded project or 100% Local Improvement District funded project.
4. Involves the skills and construction needs beyond those needed for a general repair and maintenance project.

These should be considered general guidelines. Any project in excess of \$25,000 meeting the criteria of (2), (3) and (4) above, or various miscellaneous improvements of a like nature whose cumulative total exceeds \$25,000 (i.e., street overlays) should be considered as part of the CIP process.

Program area managers are responsible for the cost estimates of their proposed programs, including future maintenance and operations costs related to the implementation of completed projects.

- E. Scoping and Costing Based on Predesign Study
For some projects it is 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. Future project costs are refined through the predesign study process.
- F. 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.
- G. 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 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.

The City Council authorizes the City Manager to administratively approve the acceleration of project schedules so long as they can be accomplished within budgeted and any allowable contingency expenditures, with the understanding that all controversial issues will be brought before the City Council. All project additions or deletions must be approved by the City Council.

- H. CIP Maintenance and Operating Costs: CIP projects, as approved by the City Council, shall have a funding plan for maintenance and operating costs identified in the project description. These costs will be included in the City's long-term financial planning.
- I. Local Improvement Districts (LID)
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 a group of property owners wish to accelerate development of a certain improvement; 3) when a group of property owners desire a higher standard of improvement than the City's project contemplates; or 4) 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 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 that the request is for street resurfacing in advance of the City's normal street resurfacing cycle, the City's contribution, if any, will be determined based on a recommendation from the Public Work's Department and a financial analysis of the impact of completing the project prior to the City's original timeline.

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% 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.

The City will recapture direct administrative costs incurred by the City for the LID project by including these in the preliminary and final assessment roles.

- J. 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 toward building new facilities that also have 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, together with the existing facilities, the City cannot afford to adequately maintain.
- K. New Facilities Should Be of High Quality, Low Maintenance, Least Cost: The intent of this policy is to guide 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.
- L. Public Input at All Phases of Projects: The City makes a serious commitment to public involvement. The City's long-range plans are developed through an extensive citizen involvement program.
- M. Basis for Project Appropriations: During the City Council's CIP Plan review, the City Council will appropriate the full estimated project cost 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.
- N. Balanced CIP Plan: The CIP Plan is a balanced six-year plan. This means that for the entire six-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, if actually needed. Over the life of the six-year plan, however, 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 six-year plan, must have specific City Council approval.
- O. 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 should be minimized, allowing the City to put money into actual projects that benefit Shoreline residents and businesses rather than into interest payments to financial institutions. There may be exceptions to this policy for extraordinary circumstances, where voted or non-voted long-term debt must be issued to achieve major City goals that otherwise could not be achieved, or would have to wait an unacceptably long time. Issuance of long-term debt must receive City Council authorization.

Staff monitors CIP cash flow regularly and utilizes fund balances to minimize the amount of borrowing required. Funds borrowed for cash flow purposes are limited to short-term obligations. Projected financing costs are included within a project in the administrative program area.

- P. 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 CIP Plan and approved by the City Council.
- Q. CIP Plan Update and Amendment: The CIP Plan will be updated at least annually as a part of the City's 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. All project additions or deletions must be approved by the City Council.
- R. Usage of County-Imposed Vehicle License Fees: The City's share of the King County-imposed Vehicle License Fees is a component of "Transportation Funding" and can therefore be assumed to be part of the annual Transportation Funding contribution to the CIP Plan as pursuant to State Law.
- S. Formalization of Monetary Agreements: All agreements between the City and outside jurisdictions, where resources are exchanged shall be in writing specifying the financial terms of the agreement, the length of the agreement, and the timing of any required payments (i.e., Joint CIP projects where the City is the lead agency, grant funded projects, etc.). 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.
- T. 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.