

CITY OF BURIEN FINANCIAL POLICIES

The City's Financial Policies are intended to serve as a Council-approved set of values and expectations for Council Members, City staff, citizens and other interested parties who may do business with the City. The use of the term "City" refers to all City officials and staff who are responsible for the activities to carry out these policies. The policies describe expectations for financial planning, budgeting, accounting, reporting and other management practices. They have been prepared to assure prudent financial management and responsible stewardship of the City's financial and physical resources.

A. City Funds

The City shall utilize "governmental fund accounting" as the organizational structure for its financial activities. The following funds have been established for budgeting, accounting and reporting.

OPERATING FUNDS

1. The *General Fund* is the general operating fund of the City. It accounts for all financial resources and transactions except those required to be accounted for in another fund.
2. The *Street Fund* is required by state law to account for dedicated state-shared gas tax revenue. The City's business license fee revenue, solid waste franchise fees and solid waste utility taxes are also deposited in this fund. Monies in the Street Fund are used for street maintenance and transportation capital projects.
3. The *Surface Water Management Fund* accounts for the maintenance and capital improvements to the City's storm and surface water drainage system. Revenues come from fees collected from residential and commercial property owners.

RESERVE FUNDS

1. The *Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund* provides monies for the orderly replacement of City assets with a value over \$5,000 and with an estimated service life of three or more years. All monies come from the City's Operating Funds (General, Street, and Surface Water Management).
2. The *Public Works Reserve Fund* is utilized for debt service or to accumulate monies for future Capital Improvement Program projects. Funding sources include the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), Park Mitigation Fees, and transfers from the General Fund.
3. The *Capital Project Reserve* was established to accumulate monies from the City's annual property tax levy for future Capital Improvement Program projects.
4. The *Art in Public Places Fund* accounts for contributions, donations and commissions on sales of art displayed in public places along with 1% of construction contracts for City owned buildings, transit centers and parks.
5. The *Local Improvement District (LID) Guaranty Fund* is required by State law to maintain a balance of not less than 10% of the City's outstanding LID assessments. All monies in the Fund come from the Street Fund; any monies in excess of the needs of the LID Guaranty Fund are returned to the Street Fund.

DEBT SERVICE FUND

1. The City maintains a single *Debt Service Fund* to account for the resources necessary to pay principal and interest when due on the City's outstanding General Obligation Bonds, Local Improvement District Bonds, and Public Works Trust Fund Loans.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS

Four Capital Improvement Program Funds have been established to account for the revenues and expenditures associated with the following Capital Improvement Program project areas:

1. Parks and General Government;
2. Town Square;
3. Transportation; and
4. Surface Water Management.

B. Resource Planning

1. To assure stability and continuity in City services, the City will prepare and update on a biennial basis a six-year Financial Forecast for all City Operating and Reserve Funds. This biennial planning process will enable citizens, staff, advisory committees, and the City Council to discuss current and future programs, service levels, and capital facility needs.
 2. The relationship between the Operating and Capital Budgets will be incorporated into the Financial Forecasts and Budgets. Maintenance and operating costs associated with new Capital Improvement Program projects shall be disclosed in the Capital Budget when projects are being considered and included in the Operating Budget when the projects are complete.
 3. The City Manager shall develop on a biennial basis a Financial Planning calendar that will provide for the timely update of the six-year Financial Forecasts for all City Operating and Reserve Funds along with the biennial process to develop, review, and adopt the City's Operating and Capital Budgets.
 4. The City's Operating and Capital Budgets will implement City Council adopted goals and policies, long-range plans, and service choices for the community.
 5. The City will use "prudent revenue and expenditure assumptions" in the development of the six-year Financial Forecasts, and Operating and Capital Budgets. Revenue and expenditure estimates shall be conservative to generally produce variances from budget estimates in the 3% to 5% range for overall fund revenues and 3% to 5% range for overall fund expenditures.
 6. One-time resources shall be identified and shall be used to support one-time expenditures. Ongoing expenditure programs shall only be supported by ongoing resources.
- Where estimated expenditures and fund balances exceed estimated resources for any Financial Forecast, potential options to bring the six-year Financial Forecasts into balance shall be included as an integral part of the Budget process.

C. Fund Balance and Reserves

Budgeted fund balances shall be established at a minimum of 15% of budgeted recurring revenue for the General Fund and 5% of budgeted recurring revenues for the Street and Surface Water Management Funds. The City’s General Fund Reserve shall be increased to 12.5% with the adoption of the 2015-16 biennial budget then 20% with the adoption of the 2017-18 biennial budget. The City hereby establishes and will maintain reservations of Fund Balance, as defined in accordance with Governmental Accounting and Financial Standards Board Statement No. 54, *Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions*. This policy shall only apply to the City’s governmental funds. Fund Balance shall be composed of the following five categories:

1. Non-Spendable Fund Balance – Amounts that are not in a spendable form (such as inventory) or are required to be maintained intact (such as the principal of an endowment fund).
2. Restricted Fund Balance – Amounts that can be spent only for the specific purposes stipulated by external resource providers (such as grantors), constitutionally, or through enabling legislation (that is, legislation that creates a new revenue source and restricts its use). Restrictions may only be changed or lifted with the consent of the resource providers.
3. Committed Fund Balance – Amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by formal action of the City Council. Commitments may be changed or lifted only by the City Council taking the same formal action that imposed the constraint originally.
4. Assigned Fund Balance – Amounts the City intends to use for a specific purpose.
5. Unassigned Fund Balance – The residual classification for the General Fund and includes all amounts not contained in the other classifications. Unassigned amounts are the portion of fund balance that is not obligated or specifically designated and is available for any purpose.

The Finance Director shall have the authority to assign amounts of fund balance to a specific purpose; however, before expenditure, amounts must be appropriated by the City Council.

When expenditures are incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted fund balance is available, restricted fund balance is considered to have been spent first.

When expenditures are incurred for purposes for which amounts in any of unrestricted fund balance classifications can be used, committed amounts shall be reduced first, followed by assigned amounts and then unassigned amounts.

D. Resource Allocation

The City Council has established the following allocations for designated revenues:

1. Not less than 1.25% of annual General Fund expenditures will be for Human Services programs.
2. A minimum of 40% and a maximum of 50% of Business and Occupation Tax Revenues are dedicated to expanded Economic Development programs and activities.

E. Accounting and Financial Reporting Policies

1. The City will maintain an accounting and financial reporting system that fully meets professional standards, state accounting requirements, and standards used by debt rating agencies.
 2. Financial procedures shall be developed to assure appropriate controls are in place to protect City assets and to provide for the development of timely financial reporting.
 3. Procurement policies and procedures shall be developed and periodically updated as needed to meet legal requirements and assure effective and competitive purchasing practices.
 4. The City will strive to maintain at least an "A1" bond rating from Moody's Investor Services.
 5. The Finance Director shall provide to the City Council not less than quarterly a Financial Status Report for all City Funds. This Report will include comparisons of actual revenue and expenditure performance to the respective Budget estimates. Where revenue collections are, or are anticipated to be significantly less than Budget estimates, and/or, where expenditures are, or are anticipated to be significantly greater than Budget estimates, the Finance Director shall include recommendations for possible adjustments or actions.
 6. In accordance with state law, the City Manager is authorized to transfer budgeted amounts within any fund; however, any revisions that alter the total expenditure authority (appropriation) of a fund, that increase the total number of authorized employee positions, or that increase any salary range within the pay classification system in the budget by more than 5% must be approved by the City Council.
7. City checks for the payment of claims may be issued prior to the City Council's review and approval of such claims, provided that the City Manager and/or Finance Director have put in place the provisions of RCW 42.24.120 which include the following:
- a. The Auditing Officer and individuals designated to sign checks shall have in place an official bond for the faithful discharge of his or her duties in an amount equal to or exceeding \$50,000;
 - b. The City Council shall adopt contracting, hiring, purchasing and disbursing policies that implement effective internal controls;
 - c. The City Council shall provide for its review of the documentation supporting claims paid and for City Council approval of all checks issued for payment of claims at a Council meeting within one month of issuance of the checks; and
 - d. The City Council shall require that if, upon its review, it disapproves some claims, the Finance Director and individuals designated to sign checks shall jointly establish the disapproved claims as receivables of the City and pursue collection diligently until the amounts disapproved are collected or until the City Council is satisfied and approves the claims.

F. Revenue Policies

1. To minimize the impact of cyclical economic downturns on General Fund revenues and services, the City will attempt to diversify its economic base.
2. Where the City has authority to establish and change fees and charges, all such fees and charges shall be adjusted annually for inflation, based on the change in the Implicit Price Deflator (IPD) for State and Local Government Consumption Expenditures and Gross Investment for the twelve month period ending June 30, or other applicable index or measure.
3. The City will establish cost recovery policies for fee supported services which consider the relative public-private benefits received from the services being provided and/or the desirability of providing access to services for specialized populations. These policies will determine the percentage of full service costs to be recovered through fees. The level of cost recovery may be adjusted to ensure that rates are current, equitable, and competitive and cover that percentage of the total cost deemed appropriate. Staff shall submit periodic financial reports to the Council on the progress in meeting the policies.
4. Grant revenue will be included in the City's Financial Forecasts and Budgets when it is probable the City will receive the grant award.
5. Property taxes levied for general government operations will be at least 1% more than levied in the prior year plus the amount received as a result of new construction. Effective with the 2012 Property Tax Levy, 70% of the Property Taxes will be allocated to the General Fund and 10% will be allocated to the Capital Projects Reserve Fund.

G. Capital Program and Prorated Policies

1. The City will plan for capital improvements over a multi-year period. The Capital Improvement Program will directly relate to the City's long-range plans and policies. When capital improvements are being planned, maintenance and operating costs will be estimated and identified within the City's Financial Forecasts. When the capital projects are complete, monies will be included in the City's Operating Budget to provide for maintenance and operating costs.
2. To plan for replacement of the City's physical assets, the City shall maintain a current inventory of all of the City assets, their condition, and estimated replacement costs. The City shall maintain an Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund consisting of cash reserves set aside each year to provide for the timely and orderly replacement of assets. The Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund shall be included in the update of the City's Financial Forecasts.
3. The City will maintain an "Art in Public Places Fund" for the purpose of providing funds for art in capital improvement projects funded wholly or in part by the City of Burien for construction or remodeling of government owned public buildings, transit centers and parks.
4. A capital project is defined as a project of a nonrecurring nature with a cost of \$25,000 or more and estimated service life of at least 10 years including major renovations of existing facilities. Routine maintenance of existing facilities, however, should not be included in capital requests.
5. The Adopted Capital Facilities Element of the Burien Comprehensive Plan provides guidance regarding the development of the City's Capital Improvement Program.

- 6. For each Fund included in the Capital Improvement Program (Parks and General Government, Town Square, Transportation, and Surface Water Management), funding sources will be identified so that it will be clear what local funds, grant funds, and other revenue sources are supporting each program.
- 7. The City will use Community Development Block Grant capital funds for eligible capital projects that are included in the City’s adopted Capital Improvement Program. The funds will only be spent on eligible projects that benefit low and moderate income individuals as defined in the Community Development Block Grant regulations.

8. Debt Provisions

- 1. When evaluating the use of councilmanic debt and the associated debt service obligations, a financial feasibility analysis will be performed including the City’s ability to make debt service payments, taking into account revenue fluctuations associated with periodic economic cycles.
- 2. Voted and councilmanic debt will be used prudently in a manner to avoid any adverse impact on the City’s credit rating.
- 3. The City will establish appropriate procedures to assure compliance with its bond covenants and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, policies or regulations.
- 4. Debt may be used on a limited basis for specific short-term cash flow needs. Debt will not be used to fund long-term revenue shortages. For major capital projects with long-term useful lives (normally 20 years or more) and where costs exceed short-term cash flows, debt may be used provided there is sufficient discretionary revenue within the Financial Forecasts Plan to service the debt without disrupting the City’s existing service delivery programs.

I. Investment Fund Provisions

- 1. The City will follow state law and the following criteria in priority order when investing City monies:
 - a. Preserve capital through prudent financial investments;
 - b. Maintain sufficient liquidity so that monies are available when needed; and
 - c. Achieve the best available rate of return.
- 2. The City will provide the appropriate accounting and reporting for any private donations or monies held in trust by the City.

9. Financial Management and Organizational Reform Provisions

- 1. The City Manager will periodically review the City’s organizational structure to assure that it is responsive to current conditions; and to eliminate service duplication within the organization and with other local government jurisdictions. Periodic performance audits may be used to assess organizational costs and effectiveness. Periodic budget reviews shall be made to examine departmental and/or program line-item costs. The City Manager has the authority to revise the organizational structure to improve performance and address opportunities, within the adopted budget.
- 2. The City Manager will periodically evaluate the City’s administrative and direct service delivery systems to determine whether a service should be provided by the City, by agreement with a qualified and competitively priced private or public contractor, or eliminated due to changes in community needs and expectations.

3. The City Council will adopt, through the biennial Budget, service levels, a work program, and performance standards that reflect City revenues, community expectations and legal requirements. The City is committed to examining how it provides services so that service levels and performance standards are met or exceeded at the least cost to the public.
4. The City's compensation structure (salaries and benefits) will be reviewed at least every three years. The City's compensation structure shall be competitive with that of comparable public sector employers in the relevant recruiting or market area; however, no adjustments shall be made if it is determined the City does not have the ability to pay. The criteria for reviewing employee salaries and benefits will also include internal comparability for similar jobs. If relevant private sector comparisons are available, they will be considered. Annual cost of living adjustments will be based on 2.0% of the change in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers Consumer Price Index for all items the twelve-month period ending June 30, or other applicable index or measure, rounded to the nearest one-tenth percent.
5. The City will, within available resources, maintain the productivity of staff through a supportive working environment, which includes appropriate equipment, supplies, materials, and professional staff development.
6. The City will evaluate its use of intergovernmental service contracts to prevent duplication of services and to assure an effective and efficient service delivery system to the community.
7. The City adopts biennial budgets at the start of every odd-numbered year. The biennial budget provides a two-year expenditure appropriation with side-by-side one-year budget displays. To avoid overspending the two-year appropriation too quickly, departments are held to single-year budgets and are generally not able to commit funds from the second year of the biennium before it begins. The City Manager may approve the carryover of unspent funds from the first year to the second year if it is determined that a program and/or project was not complete at the end of the year and funds are available.

7. Contract Approval Authority

The approval authority for execution of City contracts is as follows:

1. The City Manager will have authority to sign contracts up to \$25,000.
2. The City Manager will have authority to sign contracts over \$25,000 for equipment, goods, and services that are included in the Adopted Budget. The City Manager shall provide a report of such contracts signed as part of the quarterly financial report.
3. Contracts that exceed Adopted Budget spending authority must be placed on the Council agenda for discussion and approval.
4. Contracts over \$25,000 for initiatives not included in the Adopted Budget must be placed on the Council agenda for discussion and approval.
5. All capital projects in which there is a material change in scope must be placed on the Council agenda for discussion and approval.