

City of Long Beach Financial Policies

1) Structurally Balanced Budget

The annual budgets for all City funds will be structurally balanced throughout the budget process. Recurring revenue will equal or exceed recurring expenditures in both the Proposed and Adopted Budgets. If a structural imbalance occurs, a plan will be developed and implemented to bring the budget back into structural balance.

2) Report on How the Budget is Balanced

The City Manager will include in the narrative transmitting the Proposed Budget a concise discussion on how the proposed budget is balanced. If the structural balance changes between the Proposed and Adopted Budgets, the City Manager will clearly delineate the changes and the resulting structural balance in the Adopted Budget.

3) General Fund Reserves (Amended September 4, 2012)

The City shall maintain an Emergency Reserve equivalent to 10 percent of General Fund recurring expenditures and an Operating Reserve equivalent to 10 percent of General Fund recurring expenditures. Once the General Fund budget is brought into structural balance, a minimum of 5 percent of all new (ongoing) discretionary revenue will be devoted to the operating fund reserve. If these reserves are used, a plan will be developed and implemented to replenish the funds used.

4) Use of One-Time Resources

Once the General Fund budget is brought into structural balance, one-time resources such as proceeds from asset sales, debt refinancing, one-time grants, revenue spikes, budget savings and similar nonrecurring revenue shall not be used for current or new ongoing operating expenses. Appropriate uses of one-time resources include establishing and rebuilding the Emergency Reserve and the Operating Reserve, early retirement of debt, capital expenditures and other nonrecurring expenditures.

5) Use of New Discretionary Revenue

Once the General Fund budget is brought into structural balance, a minimum of 10 percent of all new (ongoing) discretionary revenue will be devoted to capital projects including deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs.

6) Accounting and Financial Reporting

The City will conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Reporting will include the following:

- Interim Financial Reports: staff will prepare monthly reports for the City Council that analyze and evaluate financial performance.

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- Red Flag Exceptions: The City Manager shall advise the City Council of troubling and/or positive financial information including an assessment of the impact on the City budget and financial condition. Thresholds for this reporting include:
 - Whenever a major expenditure exception occurs that will impact a fund's expenditure budget by one percent or totals over \$500,000; or
 - Whenever a major revenue exception occurs that will impact a fund's revenue budget by one percent or totals over \$500,000.

7) User Fees and Charges

The City of Long Beach is empowered to recapture, through fees, up to the full cost of providing specific services. Regular and consistent review of all fees is necessary to ensure that the costs associated with delivery of individual services have been appropriately identified, and that the City is fully recovering those costs. It is the City's policy to set user fees at full cost recovery levels, except where a greater public benefit is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the City Council, or when it is not cost effective to do so.

8) Grants

City staff will seek out, apply for and effectively administer federal, state and other grants that address the City's priorities and policy objectives and provide a positive benefit to the City. Before any grant is pursued, staff shall provide a detailed pro-forma that addresses the immediate and long-term costs and benefits to the City.

9) Long-Term Financial Plan

Each year, staff shall develop a Long-Term Financial Plan that forecasts operating expenditures and revenue for the next three to five years and capital expenditures and revenue for the next seven years. The Long-Term Financial Plan will be updated prior to the start of the annual budget process. As part of the budget message, the City Manager will advise the City Council of potential long-term positive and adverse trends along with his or her analysis of the trends. The Long-Term Financial Plan will include, but not be limited to, an analysis of such factors as:

- Economic Growth Rates
- Retail Sales Activity
- State of California Revenue and Expenditure Impacts
- Census Data
- Residential Development Activity
- Industrial Activity
- Demographic Changes

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- Legal and Regulatory Changes
- The costs that are deferred or postponed until the future
- The full ongoing impacts of grants
- The future costs of PERS
- The accumulation of benefit liabilities
- The costs of new programs that are not fully funded
- The difference between ongoing and one-time expenses and revenue
- The operating costs associated with capital improvement projects
- The impact of demographic and economic changes on services, revenue and program costs
- Analyze financial trends
- Assess problems and opportunities facing Long Beach
- Identify alternative strategies needed to address the issues
- Develop long-term forecasts and revenue and expenditures using alternative economic, planning and policy assumptions

10) Debt Issuance

General Fund long-term debt payments shall not exceed 10 percent of operating expenditures. In addition, the City shall not issue long-term (over 1-year) General Fund debt to support operating costs. All General Fund debt issuances shall identify the method of repayment (or have a dedicated revenue source).

11) Budget Requests During the Fiscal Year

All elected officials and departments requesting new programs, services or staff requests during the fiscal year that are unbudgeted must propose a spending offset at the time of the request (if costs are known) or before final approval, so that the request has a net zero effect on the budget. Individual and/or collective requests from elected officials and departments made during a City Council meeting or separately must be approved by a majority of the City Council if there is a potential fiscal or service impact.