

Financial Policies

City of Wheat Ridge Debt Management Policy *Adopted by City Council June 2011*

The City of Wheat Ridge (City) recognizes the importance of long-range, financial planning in order to meet its capital project and improvement needs. The following debt management policy provides guidance on the issuance of debt to help ensure that the City maintains a sound debt position and that its credit quality is protected. As such, the policy allows for an appropriate balance between establishing debt parameters while also providing flexibility to respond to unforeseen circumstances and new opportunities.

Responsibility and Administration of Policy

The primary responsibility for developing long-term, financing recommendations rests with the City Manager. During the annual budget process, and at any other time during the year that may be warranted, the City Manager will work with the Administrative Services Director and the City Treasurer (the internal working group) to determine if there is a need for long-term financing consideration. As part of the determination process, the internal working group shall review the financing needs outlined by the Capital Improvement Program (see below) to analyze the capital financing needs compared with available resources. The internal working group will also provide recommendations regarding refunding and restructuring of existing debt.

Once the determination is made by the internal working group to pursue finance borrowing, a refunding, or restructuring of debt, the City Manager shall prepare and present to City Council a resolution of intent to issue debt and authorizing City staff to proceed with the necessary preparations. The City Charter (Chapter XII – Municipal Funding) outlines the specific approvals (e.g. voter authorization, majority vote by City Council, etc.) that are required in order for the City to issue various types of debt and this policy will be administered in conformity with the City Charter.

The City Manager and City Treasurer will review the Debt Management Policy annually in connection with the City's annual budget process to ensure that the City is adhering to the framework outlined in this policy and will make recommendations to revise the policy as needed.

Capital Improvement Program

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will be utilized to identify capital projects and/or improvements that are part of the City's strategic vision and economic development efforts.

The CIP will cover, at a minimum, a ten (10) year period and provide a projection of the financing needs required to implement the CIP. The CIP will include the associated ongoing operations and maintenance costs of such capital assets and/or improvements so that the total costs of the projects are considered. The CIP will be updated annually by the City's Public Works' Director as part of the budget process.

Purpose of Debt

Incurrence of debt or long-term borrowing will only be used for the purpose of providing financing for capital assets, which include but are not limited to buildings, infrastructure, land acquisition and purchase of significant equipment. The City, under no circumstances, will issue debt or borrow funds to finance City operations and maintenance costs.

The City will strive to maximize the use of pay-as-you-go financing for capital projects and improvements. Debt borrowing will be considered when annual revenues and accumulation of fund balances are not sufficient to provide the necessary funding for such projects.

Types of Debt

The types of debt instruments to be used by the City may include:

- General Obligation and Revenue Bonds
- Short-term notes
- Special or Local Improvement Bonds
- Certificates of Participation
- Any other legally recognized security approved by City Council

Although permitted by the City Charter, the City will avoid the issuance of tax or revenue anticipation notes.

Additionally, the City will strive to secure a fixed rate structure when issuing debt. The City will consider a variable rate structure when market conditions favor this type of issuance, and when feasible, ensure there is a maximum interest rate provided within the variable rate structure.

Credit enhancements will be used only in instances where the anticipated present value savings in terms of reduced interest expense exceeds the cost of the credit enhancement.

Level of Debt

The City's aggregate amount of bonds or other evidences of indebtedness outstanding will not exceed three percent (3%) of the actual valuation of the taxable property within the City as shown by the last preceding assessment. In determining the amount of indebtedness outstanding, the City will adhere with the computation guidelines as established by City Charter.

The City will strive to maintain its annual debt service costs (principal and interest) for its governmental activities at a level of no greater than ten percent (10%) of general fund expenditures. The repayment terms of the debt will not exceed the useful life of the capital asset financed. Further, the City will seek level or declining debt repayment schedules and will not issue debt that provides for a balloon principal payment reserved at the end of the term of the issue. Moreover, the City will also strive to obtain redemption terms that allow for the prepayment of debt without paying a redemption penalty.

Debt Issuance Practices

As part of its debt issuance process, the City will at all times manage its debt and sustain its financial position in order to secure and maintain an Aa/AA or higher bond rating. The City will market its debt through the use of a competitive bid process when issuing general obligation debt. The

competitive bid process will also be used for other debt issuances unless time, interest rates and/or other factors make it more favorable for the City to use a negotiated process.

If needed, the City will hire an independent financial advisor, and any other professional service provider (e.g. bond counsel), to assist in the structuring of the debt transaction and to provide overall guidance throughout the process.

Guidelines for Refunding

The City shall consider refunding (advance and current refunding) outstanding debt whenever an analysis indicates the potential for net present value (NPV) savings of at least three percent (3%) can be achieved. The City may also consider refunding outstanding bonds to remove existing restrictive covenants.

The City shall also consider restructuring its existing debt in order to extend the payment terms to meet cash flow needs if deemed beneficial to the City's long-term financial and strategic planning.

Post Issuance Management

The City will invest its debt proceeds in accordance with the City's investment policy and statutory requirements. Funds will be invested in instruments with related maturities that will provide the liquidity needed to meet the cash flow needs of each project. In this regard, the City Treasurer will prepare a cash flow projection to determine the availability of funds available to be invested and their respective required maturities.

The City will comply with all arbitrage rebate requirements as established by the Internal Revenue Service. Arbitrage will be calculated at the end of each fiscal year and interest earned on the investment of debt proceeds will be reserved to pay any penalties due. Secondary market disclosures requirements established within the terms of the debt transaction will be adhered to and filed on a timely basis.

The City Treasurer will be responsible for managing the post issuance requirements listed above and/or cause any post issuance requirements to be completed.

**City of Wheat Ridge
Unrestricted Fund Balance Policy
Adopted by City Council June 2011**

The City of Wheat Ridge (City) has determined it to be a sound, financial practice to maintain adequate levels of unrestricted fund balance in its General Fund in order to mitigate current and future risks such as revenue shortfalls and unanticipated expenditures as well as to ensure stable tax rates. Additionally, the City believes that adequate unrestricted fund balance levels are a critical consideration to the City's long-term financial planning. In this regard, the City has established the following fiscal policy related to its unrestricted fund balance.

Maximum and Minimum Amounts

The City will maintain a minimum unrestricted fund balance of at least two months or approximately 17%, as recommended by the Government Finance Officer's Association (GFOA), of its General Fund operating expenditures. The City's maximum unrestricted fund balance shall not exceed 35.0% of General Fund operating expenditures. Not precluding the aforementioned minimum and maximum percentages, the City will annually target to maintain a 25.0% unrestricted fund balance percentage level as part of its annual budget process.

Use of Funds

While targeting to maintain an annual unrestricted fund balance of 25.0%, the City understands there may be circumstances that warrant that the City use these funds temporarily. The City has established the following instances where it may elect to use these funds:

- An economic downturn in which revenues are below budget
- Unexpected and unappropriated costs to service and maintain current City operations
- Unexpected and non-budgeted emergencies, natural disaster costs, and/or litigation
- Grant matching
- Early retirement of debt
- To cover deficits in other funds due to a shortfall in budgeted revenues
- Capital asset acquisition, construction and improvement projects

The use of the unrestricted fund balance for the above permitted events which cause the unrestricted fund balance to fall below the targeted 25% level will require a majority vote by City Council. Use of the restricted fund balance which causes the unrestricted fund balance to fall below the minimum required level of 17% will require a super majority vote by Council.

Terms for Replenishing

In instances where the City elects to use its unrestricted fund balance for capital asset acquisition, construction and improvement projects, the City shall replenish the unrestricted fund balance to its previous levels as soon as possible, but only after the City's current operational needs are met, and in no case, more than two years subsequent in which the unrestricted fund balance was used. For any and all other instances, as permitted by this policy, in which the City elects

to use its unrestricted fund balance, the City will replenish the unrestricted fund balance as soon as revenues are available, but only after the City's current operational needs have been met.

Excess Funds

In the event the City has accumulated its permitted, maximum unrestricted fund balance of 35.0%, the City, at the discretion and determination of City Council and the City Manager, will designate such excess funds for the following purposes:

- Reserves for equipment replacement
- Repair and maintenance of City facilities
- Funding of infrastructure improvements

Review of Policy

The City Treasurer will review the Unrestricted Fund Balance Policy annually in connection with the City's annual budgeting process to ensure that the City is maintaining adequate unrestricted fund balance levels. Additionally, at least every three years, the City Manager will review the policy and will make recommendations for modification as deemed appropriate. This policy was written using the guidelines set forth by the GFOA. As such, any updates issued by the GFOA shall be considered by the City Manager when making recommendations for modifications to this policy.

