

Figure 8-6**City of Bellevue
Debt Policy**

October 23, 2006

Background

The City of Bellevue (City) maintains conservative financial policies to assure strong financial health both in the short- and long-term. The City is an infrequent issuer of debt with debt primarily used as a tool to finance large capital investments such as property acquisitions.

Maintaining the City's bond rating is an important objective of the City's financial policies. To this end, the City is constantly working to improve its financial policies, budgets, forecasts, and financial health.

Purpose

This policy sets forth the criteria for issuance and repayment of debt. The primary objective of the Debt Policy is to establish criteria that will protect the City's financial integrity while providing a funding mechanism to meet the City's capital needs. The underlying approach of the City is to borrow only for capital improvements that cannot be funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. The City will not issue long-term debt to finance current operations.

All debt issued will be in compliance with this policy, Bellevue City Code (BCC) Chapter 2.30 - Registration Procedure for Bonds and Obligations, Chapter 35A.40 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) - Fiscal Provisions Applicable to Code Cities and Chapter 43.80 RCW - Fiscal Agencies along with all other City, State, and Federal laws, rules, and regulations.

Scope

This Policy provides general guidance for the issuance and management of all City debt. In addition, it includes the management of all debt absorbed by the City through utility assumptions or the like. It does not include the debt issued by the Bellevue Convention Center Authority.

Responsibility

Authority to issue and manage debt is derived from BCC 2.37.030. This section gives the Finance Director authority to act in the capacity of City Treasurer, which includes the duties of debt management.

This section also authorizes the Finance Director to appoint a subordinate employee from the Department to assist in the performance of the duties of City Treasurer. The Finance Director has appointed the Investment and Debt Manager to act as the Debt Manager to assist in the duties of debt issuance, interest payments, principal repayments and other debt-related activities.

The Finance Director is responsible for assuring that the activities related to the issuance and payment of bonds or other obligations not jeopardize the bond rating.

Figure 8-6 Cont.

Budgeting and Capital Planning

The City shall develop and maintain a capital planning process such as the biennial Capital Investment Program Plan for consideration and adoption by the City Council as part of the City's budget process. The Finance Department is responsible for coordinating and analyzing the debt requirements. This will include timing of debt, calculation of outstanding debt, debt limitation calculations and compliance, impact on future debt burdens, and current revenue requirements.

Prior to issuance of debt, the City will prepare revenue projections, such as the biennial budget or the Financial Forecast, to ensure that there is adequate revenue to make principal and interest payments.

Types of Long-Term Debt

The following is a description of the types of long-term debt the City may issue:

1. General Obligation

This debt is backed by the full faith and credit of the City. The State RCW limits this debt to 2.5% of the assessed valuation of the City for each of three purposes:

A. General Purposes

Debt issued in this category can be used for any purpose allowed by law.

Non-Voted

The City Council may authorize the issuance of general obligation debt up to 1.5% of the City's assessed value without a vote of the public as long as there is an available source of funding to pay the debt service. This funding source can be the diversion of an existing revenue source or a new revenue coming from the enactment of a new tax or other revenue source. The debt can take the form of bonds, bond anticipation notes, lease-purchase agreements, conditional sales contracts, certificates of participation, or other forms of installment debt.

Voted

The City Council may place any general obligation debt issue before the electorate. According to State law, if a debt issue is placed before the City's electorate, it must receive a 60% or greater yes vote and have a turnout of at least 40% of those voting at the previous general election. Voted issues are limited to capital purposes only.

B. Open Space and Parks

Debt issued in this category must be used for park and open space and/or recreation facilities. All debt in this category must be approved by the voters.

C. Utilities

Debt issued in this category must be used for utility infrastructure. All debt in this category must be approved by the voters.

2. Revenue Debt

Revenue bonds are generally payable from a designated source of revenue generated by the project which was financed. No taxing power or general fund pledge is provided as security. Unlike general obligation bonds, revenue bonds are not subject to the City's statutory debt limitation nor is voter approval required.

Figure 8-6 Cont.**3. Local Improvement District (LID) Debt**

LID bonds are payable solely from assessments of property owners within the local improvement district. Similar to revenue debt, no taxing power or general fund pledge is provided as security, and LID bonds are not subject to statutory debt limitations.

The debt is backed by the value of the property within the district and a LID Guaranty Fund. The LID Guaranty Fund is required by State law.

Short-Term Debt and Interim Financing

The City may utilize short-term borrowing in anticipation of long-term bond issuance or to fund cash flow needs in anticipation of tax or other revenue sources. Short-term borrowing excludes the City's warrant redemption process.

In accordance with BCC 3.37.070, the Finance Director is authorized to make loans from one City fund to another City fund for periods not exceeding three months. The Finance Director or designee is required to assure that the loaning fund will have adequate cash balances to continue to meet current expenses after the loan is made and until repayment from the receiving fund.

Limitation of Indebtedness

In addition to the limitations required by the RCW, the City's indebtedness is further limited by this policy to assure strong financial health. The limitations are applied to the assessed value of the City to arrive at a dollar value of indebtedness. For example, the 2008 assessed valuation used to determine the 2009 property tax levy was \$31.5 billion, and the statutory limitation for general obligation debt is 2.5%. Therefore, the City's statutory debt limitation is \$787.5 million. The following matrix shows the general limitation by type of debt. These limitations may be modified by the City Council up to the statutory limitation at the Council's discretion.

Type of Debt	Statutory Limitations	Policy Limitations	2006 Bellevue Actual
General Obligation:	2.5%	1.75%	0.70%
Non-Voted	1.5%	1.0%	0.69%
Voted	1.0%	0.75%	0.01%
Open Space and Parks	2.5%	1.75%	0.01%
Utilities	2.5%	1.75%	0.00%
Revenue	no limit	no limit *	NA
Local Improvement District	no limit	no-limit *	NA

* Revenue and LID debt is not limited because no taxing power or general fund pledge is provided as security.

Figure 8-6 Cont.**Structure and Term of Debt****1. Debt Repayment**

The City shall pay all interest and repay all debt in accordance with the terms of the bond ordinance. The maturity of bonds issued should be the same or less than the expected life of the project for which the bonds were issued. To the extent possible, the City will seek level or declining debt repayment schedules.

2. Variable-Rate Securities

When appropriate, the City may choose to issue securities that pay a rate of interest that varies according to a pre-determined formula or results from a periodic remarketing of the securities. However, the City will avoid over use of variable-rate debt due to the potential volatility of such instruments.

Professional Services

The City's Finance Department shall be responsible for the solicitation and selection of professional services that are required to administer the City's debt program.

1. Bond Counsel

All debt issued by the City will include a written opinion by bond counsel affirming that the City is authorized to issue the proposed debt. The opinion shall include confirmation that the City has met all city and state constitutional and statutory requirements necessary for issuance, a determination of the proposed debt's federal income tax status and any other components necessary for the proposed debt.

2. Financial Advisor

A Financial Advisor(s) will be used to assist in the issuance of the City's debt. The Financial Advisor will provide the City with objective advice and analysis on debt issuance. This includes, but is not limited to, monitoring market opportunities, structuring and pricing debt, and preparing official statements of disclosure.

3. Underwriters

An Underwriter(s) will be used for all debt issued in a negotiated or private placement sale method. The Underwriter is responsible for purchasing negotiated or private placement debt and reselling the debt to investors.

4. Fiscal Agent

A Fiscal Agent will be used to provide accurate and timely securities processing and timely payment to bondholders. In accordance with Chapter 43.80 RCW, the City will use the Fiscal Agent that is appointed by the State.

Method of Sale

The City will generally issue its debt through a competitive process but may use a negotiated process under the following conditions.

- The bond issue is, or contains, a refinancing that is dependent on market/interest rate timing.

Figure 8-6 Cont.

- At the time of issuance, the interest rate environment or economic factors that affect the bond issue are volatile.
- The nature of the debt is unique and requires particular skills from the underwriter(s) involved.
- The debt issued is bound by a compressed time line due to extenuating circumstances such that time is of the essence and a competitive process cannot be accomplished.

Credit Ratings

The City will maintain good communication with bond rating agencies about its financial condition. This effort will include providing periodic updates on the City's general financial condition, coordinating meetings, and presentations in conjunction with a new issuance. The City will continually strive to maintain its bond rating by improving financial policies, budgets, forecasts and the financial health of the City.

Credit enhancements may be used to improve or establish a credit rating on a City debt obligation. Credit enhancements should only be used if cost effective.

Refunding Debt

A debt refunding is a refinance of debt typically done to take advantage of lower interest rates. Unless otherwise justified, such as a desire to remove or change a bond covenant, a debt refunding will require a present value savings of three percent of the principal amount of the refunding debt being issued.

Arbitrage Rebate Monitoring and Reporting

The City will, unless otherwise justified, use bond proceeds within the established time frame pursuant to the bond ordinance, contract or other documents to avoid arbitrage. Arbitrage is the interest earned on the investment of the bond proceeds above the interest paid on the debt. If arbitrage occurs, the City will pay the amount of the arbitrage to the Federal Government as required by Internal Revenue Service Regulation 1.148-11. The City will maintain a system of recordkeeping and reporting to meet the arbitrage rebate compliance requirement of the IRS regulation. For each bond issue not used within the established time frame, the recordkeeping shall include tracking investment earnings on bond proceeds, calculating rebate payments, and remitting any rebatable earnings to the federal government in a timely manner in order to preserve the tax-exempt status of the outstanding debt.

Covenant Compliance

The City will comply with all covenants stated in the bond ordinance, contract, etc.

Ongoing Disclosure

The Debt Manager shall be responsible for providing annual disclosure information to established national information repositories and for maintaining compliance with disclosure statements as required by state and national regulatory bodies. Securities & Exchange Commission disclosure shall occur by the date designated in the bond ordinance, which is currently July 31 of each year. Disclosure shall take the form of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) unless information is required by a particular bond issue that is not reasonably contained within the CAFR.