

ATTACHMENT 5

FINANCIAL RESERVE POLICY

CITY OF WESTLAKE VILLAGE

FINANCIAL RESERVE POLICY

(1) INTRODUCTION

In an effort to ensure fiscal stability, sound financial management of public finances, and fiscal responsibility and accountability in the receipt and expenditure of City funds, it is appropriate for the City Council to adopt this Financial Reserve Policy. Through the adoption of this Policy, three distinct reserve categories are hereby established: (1) the General Fund Reserve; (2) the Capital Improvement Program Fund Reserve; and (3) the Building Maintenance and Replacement Fund Reserve.

A description of these three reserve categories is presented below.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF RESERVE CATEGORIES

(A) General Fund Reserve

- (i) Description:** This represents an annual uncommitted, unencumbered contingency reserve in the General Fund to protect the City's essential service programs and funding requirements.
- (ii) Process for establishing annual reserve:** Each fiscal year during the budget planning process, the General Fund Reserve shall be evaluated by the City Council's Fiscal/Budget Committee and staff to determine appropriate reserve resources needed based on the current fiscal and economic conditions of the City. At the time of the adoption of the City's fiscal year budget, the Fiscal/Budget Committee and staff shall recommend to the City Council, for adoption, a level of reserve sufficient to protect the fiscal needs of the City for the ensuing year.
- (iii) Basis for funding this reserve:** For purposes of this Policy, the annual General Fund Reserve level shall be evaluated and established based on an analysis of the annual fiscal resources necessary to meet essential service and funding requirements during periods of economic downturn, unforeseen natural disasters, reductions in revenue through actions by the State and/or Federal governments, other unexpected circumstances such as litigation arising from lawsuits, and cash flow constraints and working capital needs. (Note: As a "general rule of thumb", the practice of using this type of analysis will likely result in a reserve level which falls somewhere between 50% to 75% of the City's estimated General Fund operating expenditures in any given fiscal year. Contrasted with reserve levels of between 5% and 20% typically found in other municipalities, it is felt that this City's level of reserve represents sound, conservative, and fiscally prudent oversight).

- (iv) Establishment of Fiscal Year 2005-06 General Fund Reserve level: With the adoption of this Policy, the Fiscal Year 2005-06 General Fund Reserve level shall total \$4,630,000. *(Note: For illustrative purposes, Exhibit A attached to this policy statement depicts the factors and analysis used to calculate this reserve level. In subsequent fiscal years, these same factors and analysis shall be employed to establish future annual reserve levels.)*
- (v) One-time uses of the General Fund Reserve: Notwithstanding the annually adopted reserve level, the City Council has the discretion to appropriate portions of the General Fund Reserve for one-time or extraordinary purposes which may result in the reserve falling below the target level in any given year. Should this occur, the City Manager shall be instructed to prepare a plan for consideration by the City Council to implement actions within a twelve month period or longer, as determined by the City Council, to rebuild the fund balance.

(B) Capital Improvement Program Fund Reserve

- (i) Description: This represents a reserve dedicated to expenditures associated with the City's on-going, multi-year Capital Improvement Program, such as road repairs/maintenance, park projects, streetscape enhancements, etc.
- (ii) Process for establishing annual reserve: After assessing the capital improvement priorities and attendant costs during the annual budget review process, the annual reserve level shall be evaluated and established by the City Council as part of the adoption of the City's budget.
- (iii) Basis for funding this reserve: The Capital Improvement Program Fund Reserve is typically composed of revenues from two sources: the General Fund and various Restricted Funds. With regard to the former, in the event the General Fund Reserve in any given fiscal year exceeds the amount established in (2) (A) (iv) above, the excess revenue may be transferred to the Capital Improvement Program Fund Reserve by action of the City Council.
- (iv) Carry-over of reserve: Any unspent Capital Improvement Program Fund Reserve funds existing at the end of any fiscal year shall remain in this reserve and be carried-over to the subsequent fiscal year for appropriation as deemed appropriate by the City Council.

(C) Building Maintenance and Replacement Fund Reserve

- (i) Definition: This represents a reserve dedicated to expenditures associated with the on-going maintenance of various City buildings as well as upgrades and replacement of these facilities to extend their useful life or use (i.e., painting, replacement of roof, etc.).

- (ii) **Process for establishing annual reserve:** For purposes of this Policy, the annual Building Maintenance and Replacement Fund Reserve shall be evaluated each fiscal year by the City Council's Fiscal/Budget Committee and staff to determine appropriate reserve resources necessary for the on-going maintenance and replacement costs for the City's facilities/buildings. At the time of the adoption of the City's fiscal year budget, the Fiscal/Budget Committee and staff shall recommend to the City Council, for adoption, a level of reserve sufficient to ensure that the required maintenance and replacement needs of City buildings are properly budgeted from the perspective of both the ensuring year and on a long-term basis.
- (iii) **Basis for funding this reserve:** The Building Maintenance and Replacement Reserve Fund shall be funded each fiscal year through the General Fund. Such funding shall be reflected as a transfer from the General Fund to this reserve.
- (iv) **Carry-over of reserve:** Any unspent Building Maintenance and Replacement Fund Reserve funds existing at the end of any fiscal year shall remain in this reserve and be carried-over to the subsequent fiscal year for appropriation as deemed appropriate by the City Council.

(3) ANNUAL REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RESERVE POLICY

As part of the budget planning process each fiscal year, the Fiscal/Budget Committee and staff shall review this Policy and recommend any changes as deemed appropriate for review and consideration by the full City Council.

EXHIBIT A

CITY OF WESTLAKE VILLAGE FINANCIAL RESERVE POLICY (ESTABLISHMENT OF FISCAL YEAR 2005-06 GENERAL FUND RESERVE LEVEL)

(1) CRITERIA USED IN FORMULATING CITY'S GENERAL FUND RESERVE

In considering the development of a City reserve policy, several factors need to be addressed including cash flow and on-going working capital requirements, the City's exposure to natural disasters, the potential impact of economic downturns in the economy, the City's vulnerability to actions by the State, and other contingency factors.

Cash flow and on-going working capital requirements. The need to cover cash flow requirements as a function of a city's reserve is of paramount importance to municipalities. Cash flow is measured by observing the cash inflow and outflow. It is literally impossible to find a city in which the inflow of cash is precisely matched, month by month, with the outflow. For example, property taxes are collected by the counties in California in December and then again in April. The fifty-eight counties throughout the State then disburse the cities' share of property taxes shortly thereafter, so the inflow from revenue from this source is not evenly distributed month by month throughout the year. The same type of scenario occurs with building permit revenues which are collected monthly, but are tied to projects of varying valuation; hence, revenues collected from month to month can and do vary greatly.

Exposure to natural disasters. California cities are no strangers to natural disasters and southern California communities in particular are very attuned to a whole host of potential threats arising from fires, earthquakes and floods. This is an important factor in arriving at an appropriate reserve level, a portion of which may need to be used in offsetting costs that arise in dealing with natural disasters.

Exposure to economic impacts. The recession experienced in California in the early 1990's and more recent times are prime examples of economic impact. Another example might include a city that is heavily reliant upon sales tax generated by a single commercial center or auto mall that could abruptly announce its closure. Obviously, cities must decide for themselves their degree of vulnerability and the importance of setting aside reserves to respond to economic changes. Cities with a greater degree of diversity in their revenue base will generally need less of a reserve to respond to economic impacts than those that are more heavily reliant on single or limited sources of revenue.

Vulnerability to actions by the State. Historically, California cities have found themselves vulnerable to actions taken by the State—particularly as a result of the Education Reimbursement Augmentation Fund (ERAF) shift in the 1990's. Fortunately, with the passage of Proposition 1A approved by the voters in 2004, considerable protection is now in place to guard against raids of local government coffers by the State.

Notwithstanding these new safeguards, the State still has the authority to “borrow” from local government under certain circumstances. Therefore, cities need to be vigilant in monitoring actions by Sacramento, and in ensuring that adequate reserves are in place to cover cash flow and working capital requirements should such “borrowing” occur in the future.

Other contingency factors. While it is difficult to predict all future fiscal needs, certainly cities need to be aware of the fact that occasional unexpected circumstances arise which require the expenditure of General Fund dollars—ranging from litigation costs resulting from lawsuits to increased insurance costs due to claims.

(2) FISCAL YEAR 2005-06 GENERAL FUND RESERVE LEVEL

The following chart depicts the criteria used (and the related dollar impacts) in analyzing the City’s annual General Fund Reserve requirements for Fiscal Year 2005-06.

FISCAL YEAR 2005-06 GENERAL FUND RESERVE REQUIREMENTS	
(1)	Cash flow and on-going working capital requirements \$1,000,000
(2)	Downturns in economy 400,000
(3)	Vulnerability to actions by State and Federal governments 200,000
(4)	Interruptions in City revenue stream due to catastrophic/natural disasters 600,000
(5)	Exposure to potential damages to City infrastructure caused by catastrophic/natural disasters ¹ 2,230,000
(6)	Other contingency factors 200,000
TOTAL ANNUAL GENERAL FUND RESERVE REQUIREMENTS: \$4,630,000	

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¹ See attached analysis addressing infrastructure valuations.