

Capital Overview

The capital budget consists of capital projects, which are a set of activities that maintain or improve a city asset, often referred to as infrastructure—from buildings, to park trails, to roads. These activities can be new construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement of existing infrastructure. Project costs can include the cost of land, engineering, architectural planning, and contractual services required to complete the project.

Capital projects also include purchase of infrastructure, plant, and equipment that meet the following thresholds:

Land	Capitalize All
Buildings	> \$100,000
Building Improvements	> \$50,000
Land Improvements	> \$50,000
Machinery & Equipment	> \$5,000
Vehicles	> \$5,000
Office Furniture and Fixtures	> \$5,000
Computer Software and Hardware	> \$1,000
Infrastructure	> \$1,000,000
Library Collections	Capitalize All
Art Objects	Capitalize All

Project Budget

The Municipality has two documents that govern planning and funding of capital projects:

- Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) identifies project scope, funding sources, and cost for the upcoming fiscal year; and
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP) has a longer-term outlook that identifies projects for the next six years, including the upcoming fiscal year.

Planning Process

Management & Budget (OMB) prepares a draft of the upcoming year's CIB in March. For each proposed project title, the CIB lists its scope, funding source, amount, and timeline to complete the project. The Mayor's proposed capital budget includes projects identified by municipal departments and citizens that reflect his priorities, which are projects that protect the public's safety and take care of the existing infrastructure.

Typically, starting in March, a survey is distributed to local community councils who prioritize projects as well as identify additional needs. In July, the Mayor's priorities are communicated to departments. By August, municipal departments combine the community council priorities, the Mayor's priorities, and the conditions of existing infrastructure to develop a proposed CIB/CIP draft for the Mayor. The Mayor might then request additional information and make changes, which are reflected in the CIB and CIP that is submitted to the Assembly as the proposed CIB and proposed CIP by the codified due date in early October.

See page 3 for chart of annual CIB and CIP development process.

Approval Process

The Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) states the timeline for approval of the CIB and CIP:

- 120 days before the end of the fiscal year the Assembly must be provided a preliminary summary of the CIB and CIP (AMC 6.10.040). This summary is high-level and includes the total of the projects by department, year, and funding source;
- 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year the proposed CIB and CIP are submitted to the Assembly (Section 13.03); and
- The Planning and Zoning Commission is required to review the capital budgets and make recommendations to the Assembly (AMC 21.10.015.A.6).

Once the proposed budgets are formally introduced in early October, the Assembly may hold work sessions to discuss the proposed budgets presented. Two public hearings are also required, which may be held in October and November, at which the public can testify.

In late November or early December, the Assembly takes final action on the proposed budgets. As part of this process, the Assembly can revise and adjust the capital budgets. The general government capital budget/capital program will be adopted at least 21 days prior to the end of the fiscal year of the Municipality (AMC 6.10.040).

Funding Sources

General Obligation (GO) Bonds - GO bonds require voter approval and are placed before voters at the April election. Once approved and the bonds are sold, re-payment is included in the operating budget as debt service. As part of the bond approval process, the Municipality is required to disclose to voters any operations and maintenance (O&M) costs associated with each project. O&M and debt service to repay the bonds are excluded from the Municipality's tax limit.

Bond funding is used to purchase "bricks and mortar" type items with long useful lives. Bond funding can also be used to extend the life of an asset, but not repair it. Bond funding cannot generally be used to purchase assets with very short lives, but if there are sufficient long-term assets being financed at the same time, a review can be done to verify that there is sufficient amortization in the early years to repay the debt on those short-term items.

Annual debt issuance will be in accordance with the Municipality's formal Debt Management Policy approved by the Anchorage Assembly on July 12, 2016, on Assembly Resolution AR 2016-190, As Amended.

State Grants - Requests for state funding are included in the Municipality's "Legislative Program" that is compiled by the Mayor, approved by the Assembly, and submitted to Anchorage area legislators and the Governor. The goal is to have funding for these projects included in the State of Alaska's capital budget as grants to the Municipality. If approved, these grants are typically effective on July 1, the start of the State's fiscal year.

Federal grants - Applied for on an individual project basis and awarded based on the Federal agency's timetable.

Other - Other funding sources include mill levy and operating transfers that are approved in the Municipality's operating budget and are available as early as January. Also, tax-exempt financing, inter-fund loans, or donations are typical in this category. For tax-exempt financing, the term of the loan should not exceed the useful life of the asset nor the period over which it is depreciated (tangible asset) or amortized (intangible asset).

These other types of funding sources are primarily used when projects do not qualify for bonding or state or federal grants or the bonding or state or federal grant options have been exhausted. If the project is approved, the Assembly will decide on the terms and rates for the loans at the appropriation.

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

Capital investments may generate operating costs or savings which may be one-time or ongoing and may be absorbed within the operating budget. However, these costs may change as decisions and actions regarding asset control and upkeep are made with the goal of increasing efficiency, reliability, and safety. Efficiency investments will often reduce overall operating costs. Reliability and safety investments might increase overall operating cost. Capturing these costs at the initiative level will help ensure sound decisions.