

Current Mechanisms for Funding and Prioritization of Civic and Partner Projects

Capital and Operating Budgets

The Capital Investment Outlook and the Operating Budget Outlook provide a long-term view of the City's infrastructure and operating requirements and guide the development of multi-year capital and operating budgets. As part of the capital prioritization process, funding from other orders of government and partner and private sources are considered and evaluated. All leveraged funding opportunities are noted in the capital prioritization list and used as part of the prioritization analysis.

The capital budget allocates the available funding across projects and allows City Council to make decisions on both growth and renewal priorities. In addition to the Capital Investment Outlook, the capital budget process is guided by capital planning principles and prioritization criteria which are used to evaluate and produce an initial ranking of the projects. Capital projects, including civic and partner projects, are evaluated using an objective process that ensures projects are aligned and prioritized based on City Council's strategic plan as a means to highlight projects with the greatest benefits to the City. In addition, leveraged dollars already committed by other orders of government, partners or private sources are scored higher.

Regular supplemental budget adjustments, and therefore project prioritization, can be driven by updates to economic forecasts, changes in the commitment of partner funding, administrative changes and, in some cases, requests to City Council to support partner programs or projects that were not initially captured in the long-term strategic plans and budgets.

Council-Directed Funding

City Council may direct Administration to use supplemental budget adjustments or other available sources of funding (e.g. Community Facility Partner Capital Grant, Financial Stabilization Reserve, tax levy) to advance priorities before they are evaluated through the typical capital or grant prioritization processes. When possible, Administration encourages community groups to apply within the regular processes to allow for evaluation along with other capital priorities.

Grant Programs

The City manages a number of programs that can serve as a funding source for civic and partner projects. These programs include the Community Facility Partner Capital Grant, the Community League Infrastructure Program, and the Neighbourhood Parks Development Program. In some cases, projects are awarded funding in the form of a grant but outside of grant programs. This has occurred when the funding timelines do not match the grant application process

or when the funding required exceeds the budget allocated to the grant programs.

Applications to grant programs are evaluated by a dedicated review committee. The review process includes an assessment of community needs, project financial and operational sustainability, alignment with the City's long-term strategic goals, project readiness, and project risks among other metrics. Approval of grants is either done by Administration or Council. Grants such as the Community League Infrastructure Program are approved by Administration at the Deputy City Manager level. Others, such as the Community Facility and Partner Capital Grant, are presented by Administration as recommendations to City Council and are based on the results of this systematic evaluation, the number and size of the projects, and the funding available.

Project Development and Delivery Model (Capital Project Governance Policy C591)

The Project Development and Delivery Model guides the management of the City's capital projects as they progress through five stages of the infrastructure project life cycle: strategy, concept, design, build, and operate. At each stage, the project is reviewed to assess its feasibility in relation to the defined scope.

Strategic Frameworks

Administration reviews projects for alignment with the City's strategic goals and approved plans and strategies which outline guiding principles and long-term goals for services and facilities. For instance, the evaluation criteria used to review capital projects include assessing the impact of a project on the corporate goals, and the alignment between project outputs and citizens needs.