



Capital Improvement Policy

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1. Purpose

The Capital Improvement Policy defines capital projects and establishes the process for adopting and amending the County's five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The scope of this policy includes all capital projects accounted for in Buncombe County's general fund, enterprise funds and other components. School capital is managed by the appropriate jurisdiction and is not within the scope of this policy.

Buncombe County recognizes that a capital improvement policy used in combination with a CIP can help to effectively plan and organize capital expenditures and associated operating cost when they are put into operation, as well as:

- Strengthen a government's borrowing position by demonstrating sound fiscal management and showing commitment to maximizing public benefit within resource constraints;
- Assure sustainability of infrastructure by establishing a process for addressing maintenance and replacement; and
- Recognize interrelationships among projects to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

Both the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and North Carolina Local Government Commission (NCLGC) strongly encourage the development of capital planning policies and capital improvement programs.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all Buncombe County departments and employees unless there is a conflict with GS 153A-103 related to hiring, discharging, and supervising employees. Such

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exclusion is noted at the end of this policy. Otherwise, departments may adopt and enforce policies that are more restrictive than County Policy.

3. Policy

3.1 CIP Process

Capital projects requiring new funding should be identified and approved as part of the CIP. The Board of Commissioners may choose to approve a non-CIP project due to urgency or receipt of restricted funds. The CIP will be updated annually for the purpose of reassessing capital needs. A timeframe will be identified in the annual budget calendar for departments to submit new CIP projects and update existing CIP projects.

All capital project requests will be reviewed, analyzed, and presented to the Capital Review Team to develop and update the County's five-year CIP. Prioritization of projects will be based on the alignment with criteria and any additional factors established or deemed appropriate by the Capital Review Team.

Fiscal capacity will be considered so that the final CIP is based on what can realistically be funded. Projects not funded by a dedicated revenue source will be reviewed and classified as either Pay-Go or Debt-Funded projects. Pay-Go financing uses current resources, such as current tax dollars or accumulated reserves to fund a project. This determination will be made in accordance with the County's General Fund Balance policy and will consider operating budget projections, available fund balance, and other financial policies and plans. The related debt service impact and financial implications for each classification will be identified.

3.2 CIP Adoption

The first year of the Capital Improvement Plan will be approved in conjunction with the adoption of the annual Budget Ordinance. CIP approval by the Board of Commissioners establishes commitment to the first year capital projects only.

The County shall appropriate all funds for capital projects with a Project Ordinance in accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. A capital project will not begin until a balanced Project Ordinance is adopted. Once adopted, a capital project may not be materially amended without Board approval.

Once an adopted capital project is complete, any remaining funds cannot be reallocated without Board approval. Remaining funds from Debt-Funded projects are subject to limitations set forth in the debt agreement.

3.3 Administration and Implementation

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A Capital Review Team will convene annually to evaluate project requests and assist in presentation of requests. The Budget department will provide support for the CIP process, publish the annual budget calendar, maintain CIP documentation, prepare Project Ordinance information, and be a resource for capital project stakeholders as needed.

Project Managers are responsible for monitoring the status of their capital projects as well as identifying and communicating any changes in project status, scope, or cost to their Capital Review Team representative.

4. Policy Non-Compliance

Employees willfully violating the terms and conditions of this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

5. Audit

All policies for Buncombe County may be subject to audit or review as outlined in the [Internal Auditor's Statement](#).

6. Definitions

- 6.1 **Capital Project** - construction, renovation or demolition project, or acquisition of land or other assets, valued at or above the threshold established by the Capital Review Team and with a useful life of at least five years. This includes significant capital maintenance projects. Improvements to or expansions of existing assets must increase appraised value or add to life expectancy to qualify as a capital project.
- 6.2 **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)** - a long-range plan for analysis and approval of proposed capital improvement projects, which includes estimated project costs and funding sources that the County expects to carry out over a five-year period.
- 6.3 **Project Manager** – employee charged with the management of a specific Capital Project.

7. Approval and Revision History

Policy Origination Date:	October 5, 2020
Requires Board Approval:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Board Approval Dates:	December 17, 2020
Policy Exclusions:	None
Revision History:	

8. Background

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