

Since fiscal year 1995-1996, the City has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The GFOA confers this award to local governments that demonstrate proficiency in four areas of their budget document:

- As a policy document, the budget provides a coherent description and rationale for major policies.
- As a financial plan, the budget provides a consolidated picture of all operations: it explains revenues, debt, expenditures, and projected year-end financial condition.
- As an operations guide, the budget provides direction to operating managers and indicates the performance objectives and measures for which officials are to be held accountable.
- As a communication device, the budget must be useful to not only elected officials but also to citizens, the media, the business community, and other stakeholders as well.

In continuing the application of these proficiencies, staff has identified additional budget objectives for the coming year, including:

- Creating a balanced budget with a continued focus on streamlining costs
- Maintaining existing reserves in the General Fund, and bolstering those reserves to provide additional safeguards against State takeaways given the State's fiscal condition
- Reviewing utility fund reserve policies and funding accordingly
- Increasing scheduled allocations of funds from the General Fund to the CIP Fund to support projects; identify funding strategies for top priorities
- Funding of City Council's Strategic Plan initiatives based on a prioritized list
- Increasing City Council Contingency funding to accommodate mid-cycle needs
- Ensuring sufficient time for City Council review of the budget prior to adoption
- Enhancing Performance Measurements, including linking them to department initiatives

In addition, the City Council and community may have further, specific objectives that may be considered. The ultimate purpose of this discussion is to provide the staff with clear direction at the beginning of the budget process so that the proposed budget will include those items of greatest importance.

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide staff with direction for the FY 2012-2013 budget, which is scheduled to be delivered in the "proposed" stage at the May 15th City Council meeting.