

# ***CITIZENS' GUIDE TO REVIEWING THE BUDGET***

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## **General Comments**

This budget document describes Town services and revenue sources recommended for the Town's budget for fiscal year from July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005.

The Mayor and Council's adoption of an annual budget is one of the most important decisions of the Town as a service organization and governmental entity. The annual budget translates the values of the Chapel Hill community into a plan of action for services, programs and projects, and resources for providing services.

The Mayor and Council's decisions in adopting a budget are in the form of an ordinance allowing expenses and raising of revenue during the coming budget year, an ordinance authorizing employee positions and wage and salary ranges, resolutions adopting fees and charges and related actions.

In accord with normal accounting and budgeting practices for cities and towns, Town services supported partly or entirely with general taxes are budgeted in a General Fund.

The General Fund includes costs and revenues for police, fire, refuse collection, street maintenance and other public works services, human services, planning, construction, inspections, engineering, library, parks and recreation, general administration and support services, and some miscellaneous items.

The public transportation, public parking, public housing, internal service funds and supplemental downtown district services are budgeted in separate, individual funds.

This budget is intended to identify most

services offered by the Town and proposed objectives for quality, quantity, timing, etc. of services. The individual department and division overviews give details about current Town services approved by Council. However, there may be a few activities not described or noted only in summary form here. We invite you to call the appropriate Town departments as listed in the blue pages of the BellSouth directory for additional information. Any changes, deletions or additions to current services which may be decided during the proposed budget discussions will be reflected in the adopted budget for 2004-05.

The information in this budget document is intended to be understandable to citizens with a general knowledge of business practices and of most Town services. We have attempted to minimize the use of technical words and phrases, or to define them. A glossary of terms is provided in the Budget Appendices. However, if something in this material is not clear, we invite you to call us at (919) 968-2712 or send an email to [manager@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:manager@townofchapelhill.org).

## **State Laws Regarding Local Governmental Budgets**

The Town's fiscal year begins on July 1 in accord with requirements in the North Carolina Local Governmental Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

This legislation requires that the Manager submit a recommended budget to the Mayor and Council, that the Council hold a public hearing, and that the Council adopt an annual budget or interim budget for 2004-05 by July 1.

# ***CITIZENS' GUIDE TO REVIEWING THE BUDGET***

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State laws also determine the types of services and regulatory authority which the Town can provide, the revenue sources available to the Town and in many cases the maximum level of such revenue. For example, the Town is not authorized to levy income taxes, and local option sales taxes are limited to a total of 2 and 1/2%. The Town is authorized to provide various types of services needed in urban areas, including police and fire protection, refuse collection and street maintenance services.

In North Carolina, county governments are responsible for public health, education, social services, and various other programs. Funding for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School district serving southeast Orange County is provided through County and State government decisions and funding.

## **Financial Management Principles**

The recommended budget is based on financial management principles including:

- \* The Town makes conservative estimates of revenues and costs to minimize the chance that actual revenues received during a budget year may be less than expected, or that actual costs may exceed estimates.
- \* The Town seeks to use stable, annually recurring revenues to pay for costs (such as wages, supplies, etc.) which tend to continue from year to year. The Town avoids using one-time revenues for annually recurring costs.
- \* The Town seeks to keep a reserve of money saved in past years (undesignated net assets or fund balance) so that the Town will not have to borrow funds early in the fiscal year when revenues are less than the cost of

providing services, and so that the Town will have a reserve for any major unexpected costs or revenue fluctuations between budget years. The Town's objective is to have a General Fund balance of at least 8% to 12% of the General Fund budget for cash flow purposes in accord with State guidelines, and additional amounts for unforeseen circumstances and emergencies.

- \* The Town avoids or limits the deferral of costs to future years. When deferrals are proposed, the amount is limited to the extent practical and the deferral(s) are specifically identified.
- \* The Town seeks to properly maintain buildings, equipment, etc. to protect the community's investment in these assets.
- \* The Town seeks to recover from user fees all or a significant portion of the cost of some kinds of services, so that the citizens who benefit most from a service will pay for the service. However, several kinds of fees are waived or lowered for low income families, for youth and for senior citizens.
- \* The Town uses general taxes to provide some special services or assistance to citizens with special needs because of low income or other conditions.
- \* The Town seeks to maintain a competitive position in the Triangle labor market to recruit and retain employees who will provide services with the quality desired by the community.
- \* The Town from time to time issues bonds or uses installment contracts authorized by State law to finance capital projects which

# ***CITIZENS' GUIDE TO REVIEWING THE BUDGET***

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will benefit the community for a long period and which should therefore be paid for over a long period.

## **Budget Process**

The Mayor and Council's process and schedule for developing the 2004-05 budget included forums and hearings for citizens to express their views, raise questions and concerns and make comments on services, policies and funding items related to the budget.

The description of the budget process and the budget calendar are included in this Introduction and Background section.

Citizens were invited to make comments at any time by letter to the Mayor and Council or to the Town Manager at 306 North Columbia Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516-2124, by fax to Town Hall at (919) 969-2063, or by electronic mail at [manager@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:manager@townofchapelhill.org).

Citizens with disabilities in hearing or speaking are invited to call the Town at (919) 968-2743 (TDD: (919) 968-2700) for assistance in participating in public hearing or commenting by other means.

## **Elements of the Budget Document**

- Introduction and background information with regard to the development of the budget including the budget process, the budget goals and assumptions made.
- Department and division mission and duties as well as their budget and a summary of budget changes.

- Explanations of debt and the capital program.
- Summary information with regard to net assets (fund balance), revenues and expenditures for all funds, tax rates and tax collections and staffing and organizational structure.

Each department has a separate overview. Following is an explanation of the information included for departments and divisions.

## **Department Sections**

Each department section contains a department overview intended to provide information about the department; organizational charts for the department; staffing charts for each department; and a budget summary for the department. Also included is the same information for individual divisions within each department.

### **◆ Department Overview**

Each department section starts with an overview page which states the Mission Statement and summarizes key duties of the department.

### **◆ Organizational Chart**

Following the department overview is an organizational chart for the department that displays the personnel in the department broken out by divisions, where applicable.

### **◆ Staffing Chart**

The staffing chart for each department lists all positions within the department in full-time

# ***CITIZENS' GUIDE TO REVIEWING THE BUDGET***

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equivalents in order to provide a snapshot of staffing for the various department functions.

## **◆ Budget Summary**

The budget summary for each department provides a summary of significant budget changes in a brief narrative format. It also lists expenditures summarized in the categories of Personnel, Operating Costs and Capital Outlay. Revenues are also listed in a summary format based on revenue sources. These expenditure and revenue summaries provide historic and recommended information as follows:

- 2002-03 Actual
- 2003-04 Original Budget
- 2003-04 Revised Budget
- 2003-04 Estimated
- 2004-05 Recommended Budget
- % Change from 2003-04 Original Budget

A reader's guide entitled "Budget Format—The Basics" follows.

In addition to the information described above, the Recommended Budget contains additional supplemental information intended to assist the reader. This information includes information regarding fund structure, fund descriptions and major revenues and a glossary.

# ***BUDGET FORMAT - THE BASICS***

NOTE: All tables in the recommended budget present the same three-year columns.

Audited data from the last completed fiscal year.

Budget for each category as amended during the prior fiscal year.

The recommended budget for the new fiscal year that begins on July 1.

Budget for each category as originally adopted for the prior fiscal year. The fiscal year begins July 1 of each calendar year.

Estimate of prior year final cost/revenues by category.

The percentage of change from the original budget in the prior year to the recommended budget.

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Includes salaries, wages, and employee benefits (for example FICA, insurances).	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Estimated</b>	<b>Recommended Budget</b>	<b>from 2003-04</b>
Personnel	759,140	833,544	833,544	833,544	809,367	-2.9%
Operating Costs	123,123	106,693	151,605	122,484	107,446	0.7%
Capital Outlay	9,011	5,000	5,000	5,000	-	-100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>891,274</b>	<b>945,237</b>	<b>990,149</b>	<b>961,028</b>	<b>916,813</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>

Includes all operating costs except those related to personnel or capital.

Includes costs for land, buildings, equipment and other purchases with an expected usefulness of 3 years or more and a cost of more than \$5,000.

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Revenues for the general benefit of the Town and not related to specific functions. These revenues include property taxes, State-shared revenues, sales taxes, interest and appropriated net assets (fund balance).	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Estimated</b>	<b>Recommended Budget</b>	<b>from 2003-04</b>
General Revenues	730,933	776,437	821,349	846,228	770,013	-0.8%
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Charges for Services	11,678	10,800	10,800	11,800	11,800	9.3%
Licenses/Permits/Fines	90,594	85,000	85,000	40,000	70,000	-17.6%
Transfers/Other Sources	58,069	73,000	73,000	63,000	65,000	-11.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>891,274</b>	<b>945,237</b>	<b>990,149</b>	<b>961,028</b>	<b>916,813</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>

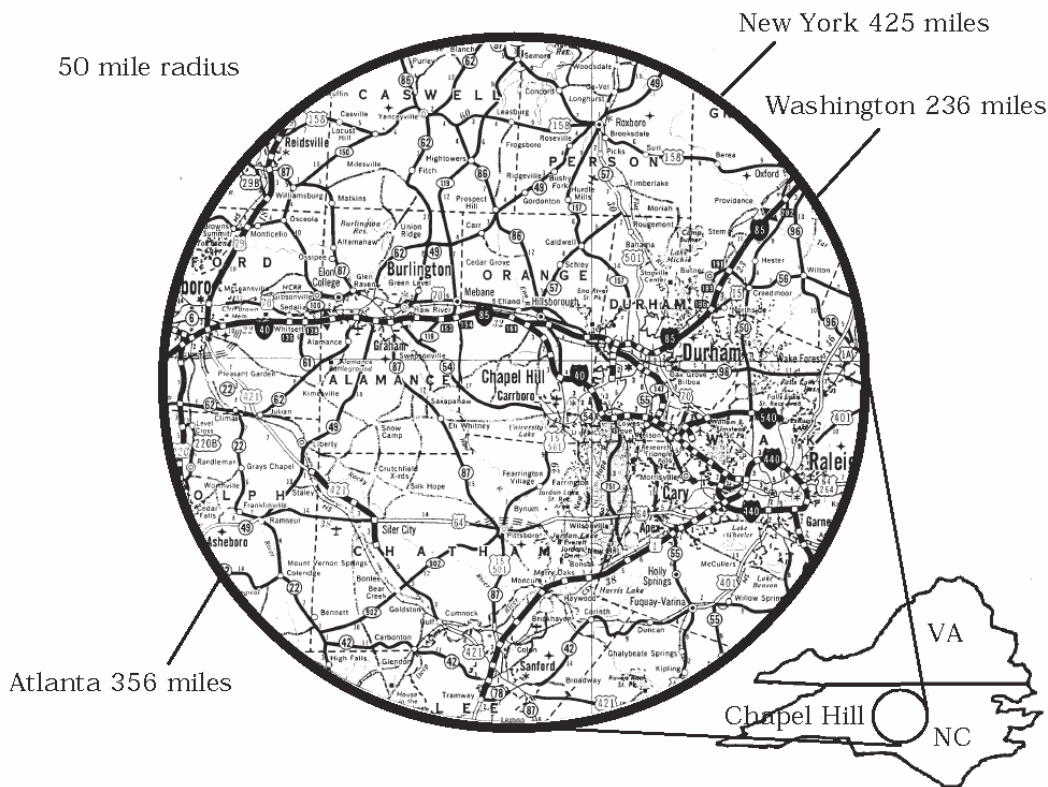
These revenues are directly related to departmental functions.

# ***CHAPEL HILL – LOCATION, GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE & DEMOGRAPHICS***

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## **Location**

The Town of Chapel Hill is located principally in Orange County and partially in Durham County in the north central portion of North Carolina on the Piedmont Plateau, approximately equidistant between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia. The area's topography is characterized by rolling hills. The Town, which was incorporated in 1819, presently covers an area of 21.1 square miles and has a population of 50,540 according to the latest estimate, issued by the State of North Carolina for July 2003. The Town is the home of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's oldest public university, established in 1789. Today, the University enjoys a reputation as one of the best public universities in the United States.



The Town conducts an ongoing planning and programming process through which it implements orderly expansion and management of the growth and development of the community in accord with the Comprehensive Plan, last revised in spring of 2000 and updated in May 2003. At present, the Town exercises zoning and building controls over a 27.2 square mile area that includes the corporate limits and a 6.1 square mile planning jurisdiction.

# CHAPEL HILL – LOCATION, GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE & DEMOGRAPHICS

The growth of the Town has been directly related to the expansion of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Enrollment at the University has risen from 8,791 in 1960 to 26,359 in 2003. It is anticipated that expansion will continue to occur in University-related health facilities such as the UNC Health Care System.

## Government Structure

The Town has a Council-Manager form of government. The Town Council is comprised of a Mayor and eight-member Council. All Council Members serve four-year terms. The Mayor and four Council Members are elected every two years. All elections are on a non-partisan basis. The Council appoints the Town Manager and Town Attorney. The Mayor presides over the Council meetings and has full voting privileges. The Town Manager is the chief administrative officer of the Town. Town departments are responsible to the Town Manager for the provision of public services.

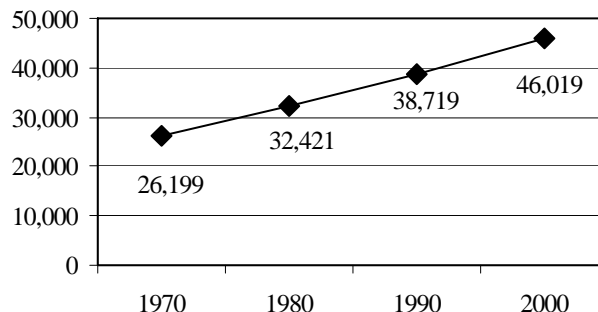
## Demographics

### POPULATION GROWTH AND CHARACTERISTICS

#### Population Growth

Chapel Hill’s population has increased by over 10,000 people since the 1990 Census, totaling 46,019 in the 2000 Census. The official population is now 50,540. *Figure 1* shows the Town’s growth since 1970. The 10-year growth for 1990 to 2000 amounts to 18.9 percent, about 5 percent less than the County, and 2.5 percent less than the 21.4 percent statewide population growth. While most Chapel Hill residents live in Orange County, a little over 2,000 Chapel Hill residents live in Durham County, or about 4 percent of the Town’s population as shown in Table 1.

**Figure 1. Chapel Hill Population: 1970-2000**



Source: 2000 Census, 2003 Chapel Hill Data Book

**Table 1. Chapel Hill Population by County**

County	Chapel Hill Population
Durham County	2,019
Orange County	48,521
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50,540</b>

Source: NC Office of State Planning

#### Hispanic Population Growth, Racial Makeup

A demographic shift revealed in the 2000 Census is the increase in the number of people who described themselves as being Hispanic or of Latino origin, a trend evident at the national, state and local level. (The Census Bureau considers Hispanic as a demographic group, not a race, and Hispanics may be of any race.) In September 2003, the US Census Bureau issued an amended 2000 Census count for the Town.

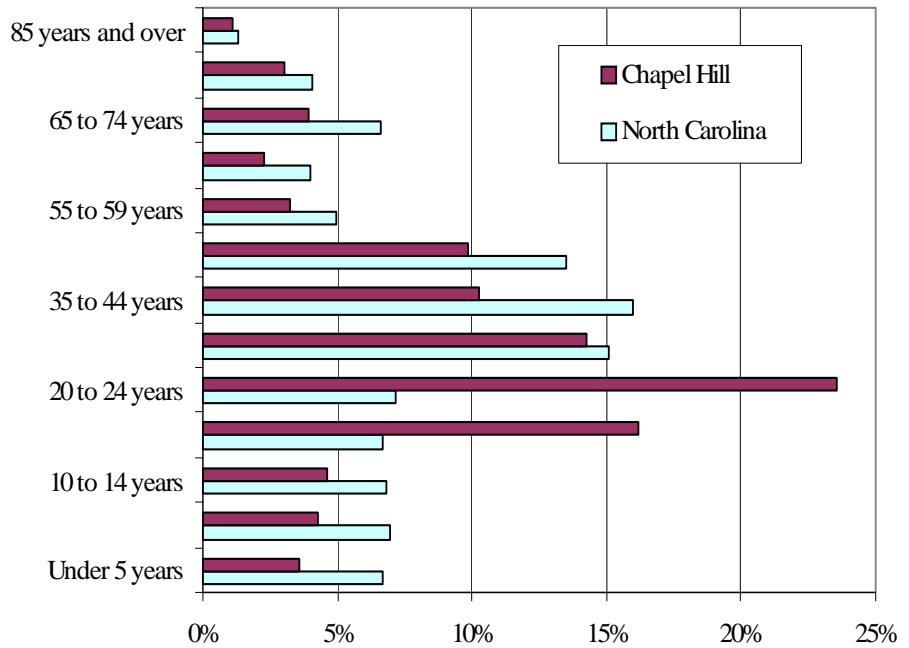
# CHAPEL HILL – LOCATION, GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE & DEMOGRAPHICS

The percentage of White and African American persons as a share of the Town’s total population declined from 1990 to 2000, although the total numbers for both groups are higher. People who identified themselves as being of more than one race totaled just over 900 in Chapel Hill, or 1.9 percent of the Town’s total population.

## Age

**Figure 2. Age Distribution: 2000 Census**

Figure 2 shows the population distribution for Chapel Hill and the State according to age groups. For example, the bar chart illustrates that the concentration of residents who are in the 15-to-19 age group comprises 16 percent of the Town’s population, while the 20-to-24-year-old age group comprises 23.5 percent of Chapel Hill’s population. As a comparison, the 20-to-24 age group represents about 7 percent of the State population.

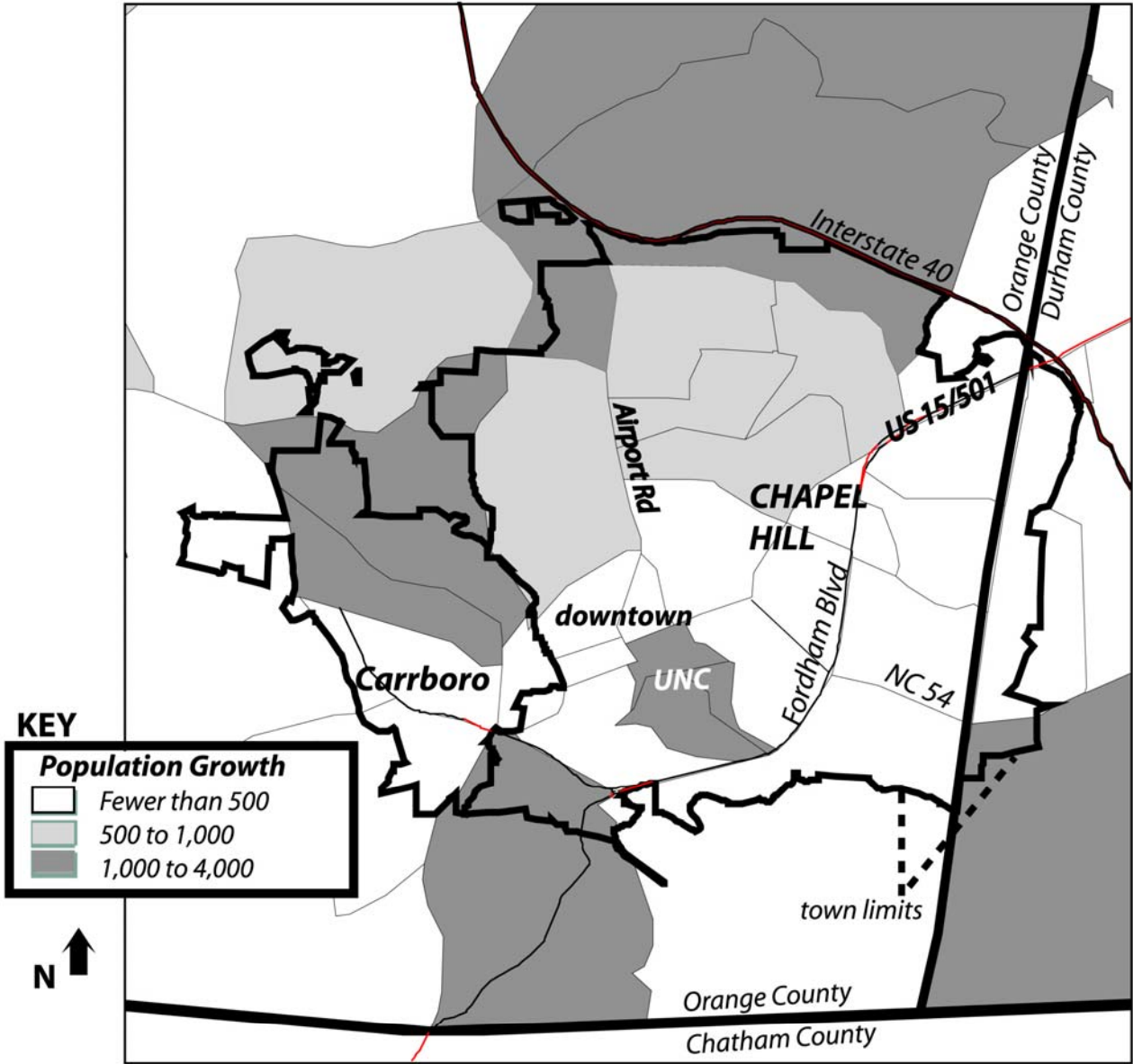




**CHAPEL HILL –  
LOCATION, GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE & DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Chapel Hill Population Growth, 1990-2000**

Change in Chapel Hill-Carrboro Area Population by Census Boundaries



Source: 1990, 2000 Census  
Town limits are as of the 2000 Census

**Additional Demographic Information**  
(Based on 2000 Census, except as noted)

**Income**

Median Family Income (estimated by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2002) \$90,140  
 Percentage of Population Below Poverty Level 21.6%

**Educational Attainment**

*(persons 25 years and older)*

No High School Diploma	5.7%
High School Graduate	6.1%
Some College, No Degree	11.2%
Associate Degree	3.3%
Bachelors Degree	33.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	40.5%

**School Facilities (from 2003 Data Book)**

*(Chapel Hill-Carrboro School District)*

Elementary	8
Middle	4
High	2
Total	14

**School Enrollment**

*(persons 3 years and older)*

Preprimary School	964
Elementary (grades 1-8)	3,472
High School (grades 9-12)	1,848
College	19,433

**Workforce - Occupation**

Management, professional, and related	56.9%	Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.2%
Service occupations	13.2%	Construction, extraction, maintenance	3.0%
Sales and office occupations	23.5%	Production, transportation and moving	3.3%

**Orange County's Major Employers**

Employer	# of Employees	Employer	# of Employees
University of NC at Chapel Hill	10,676	General Electric Co., Inc.	750
UNC Hospitals	6,819	Orange County Government	680
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NC	2,700	Town of Chapel Hill	651
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	1,580	Harris Teeter, Inc.	497
Orange County Board of Education	907		

Source: Orange County Economic Development Commission , 2002

Employers with 450 employees or more

# ***SUMMARY OF KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS***

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*The Town of Chapel Hill has many relationships with surrounding communities and with other State and regional organizations. Here is a summary of those relationships:*

## **Town of Carrboro**

- Receives fixed-route, E-Z Rider and Shared Ride transit service from Chapel Hill.
- Appoints two members to Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board and two members to the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) board of directors.
- Receives traffic signal system services from Chapel Hill.
- Mutual aid agreement for fire protection; limited joint training with Chapel Hill; uses Chapel Hill's fire training facilities.
- Mutual aid agreement for police services.
- Chapel Hill operates 30 public housing apartments in Carrboro.
- Open facilities policy for recreation services.
- Participates with Orange County in the Joint Planning Agreement.
- Regular staff communications regarding services and policies.
- Development at borders affects each community.

## **Orange County**

- Mutual aid agreement for police services.
- Appoints two members to Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board; provides landfill and recycling services to Chapel Hill.
- Appoints two members to OWASA board of directors.
- Participates in Joint Planning Agreement.
- Operates 911 emergency communications system; dispatches fire and police service units.
- Provides jail services for Chapel Hill.
- Provides tax assessing and collection services for Chapel Hill; Chapel Hill provides a tax collection service point for Orange County.
- Provides grants to Chapel Hill for recreation, library services, and Project Turnaround; Chapel Hill provides grants to Orange County for Senior Center, Economic Development Commission, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program.
- Open facilities policy for recreation services.
- Enforces soil and erosion control ordinance in Town of Chapel Hill.

# ***SUMMARY OF KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS***

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## **Town of Hillsborough**

- Mutual aid agreement for fire protection; uses Chapel Hill’s fire training facilities.
- Mutual aid agreement for police services.
- Appoints two members of the Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board.

## **Orange Water and Sewer Authority**

- Chapel Hill appoints five members of the nine-member OWASA board of directors.
- Reviews utility plans related to standards and specifications.
- Mutual aid agreement for emergency response.
- Extends water and sewer services in Chapel Hill zoning jurisdiction in accordance with policies of the Council.
- Maintains fire hydrants used by Chapel Hill fire department.
- Chapel Hill purchases water and sewer services from OWASA.

## **Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System**

- Must submit development applications to Chapel Hill for approval if sites are in the Chapel Hill zoning jurisdiction.
- Joint use agreements for use of some recreation facilities.
- Pays for school resource officers provided by Chapel Hill police department in high schools and middle schools.
- Pays for school crossing guards at elementary schools.
- May designate and “reserve” school sites under Chapel Hill zoning ordinance.

# ***SUMMARY OF KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS***

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## **University of North Carolina**

- Purchases fixed-route and Shared Ride transit service from Chapel Hill; provides own service to supplement EZ-Rider service provided by the Town; provides Point-to-Point transportation service for students, staff and faculty.
- Provides refuse collection and recycling services for University properties.
- Traffic signals and town streets in University campus area are maintained by Chapel Hill.
- Fire protection services are provided by Chapel Hill; University budget contributes part of the revenues used by the state to pay part of the cost of fire protection services.
- Mutual aid agreement for police services and other emergencies.
- Must submit development applications to Chapel Hill when sites are within the Chapel Hill zoning jurisdiction.
- Joint Staff Committee meets quarterly.

## **City of Durham**

- Competes with Chapel Hill for transportation funding.
- Provides staff for Metropolitan Planning Organization (Transportation Advisory Committee).
- Durham-Chapel Hill Work Group meets regularly to review development issues.

## **Durham County**

- Portion of Chapel Hill is in Durham County.
- Provides tax assessing and tax collection services for Chapel Hill portion of County.
- Development at border affects each community.

# ***SUMMARY OF KEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS***

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## **Chatham County**

- Orange-Chatham Work Group meets occasionally to review development issues.
- Development at border affects each community.

## **Triangle Transit Authority**

- Chapel Hill appoints one member of the 13-member governing board.
- Provides bus service in Chapel Hill connecting to Durham, Research Triangle Park and other areas of the Triangle.
- Competes with Chapel Hill for transit funding from the federal and state government.

## **Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG)**

- Chapel Hill appoints one delegate and one alternate to the board of delegates.
- The Town pays dues to support basic operations of the TJCOG and receives planning and other services.

## **State of North Carolina**

- The State established the Town by granting a municipal charter.
- The Town's powers are granted by the State, and the State imposes limits on the powers of the Town.
- The State constructed and maintains a road network within the Town limits.
- The State is the conduit for transportation improvement funds used to maintain roads and to maintain and operate the transit system.
- The State collects certain taxes and shares proceeds with the Town (sales tax, beer and wine tax, etc.) that amount to nearly a third of the total General Fund revenues in normal years.

# ***FUND DESCRIPTIONS AND MAJOR REVENUES***

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<b><u>Fund Title</u></b>	<b><u>Accounts For</u></b>	<b><u>Primary Funding Sources</u></b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	Normal recurring Town activities such as planning, inspections, engineering, public works, public safety, parks and recreation and library	Property and other taxes, State-shared revenues, grants, charges for services, licenses, permits and fines
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Transportation Fund	Operation and maintenance of public transportation, E-Z Rider and Shared Ride services	Federal and State grants, property taxes and charges for services
Transportation Capital Reserve Fund	Reserve fund for replacement of buses and other capital equipment and improvements	Vehicle use fees and contributions from the Transportation Operating Fund
<b>PARKING</b>		
Off-Street Parking Fund	Off-street parking facilities, Rosemary Street Garage, and monthly rental parking	Short-term parking fees and monthly rentals
On-Street Parking Fund	Parking enforcement and parking meters	Parking meter collections and parking citations
<b>HOUSING</b>		
Public Housing Fund	Management of public housing units and residential rehabilitation	Federal grants and rental income
Housing Loan Trust Fund	Loan programs for the purchase and renovations of homes for lower income families	Second mortgage payments and interest income
<b>DEBT</b>		
Debt Service Fund	General obligation debt	Interest on investments and transfer from General Fund

# ***FUND DESCRIPTIONS AND MAJOR REVENUES***

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<u>Fund Title</u>	<u>Accounts For</u>	<u>Primary Funding Sources</u>
<b>CAPITAL PROGRAMS</b>		
Capital Improvements Funds	Capital improvements projects such as park improvements, fire hydrants, stormwater management and traffic signals	Transfer from Capital Reserve Fund
Capital Reserve Fund	Reserve fund for capital improvements projects such as the library facilities, parks and recreation improvements, fire hydrants, stormwater management and traffic signals	Sales tax and transfer from General Fund
<b>OTHER FUNDS</b>		
<u>Special Revenue Funds</u>		
Cablevision Public Access Fund	Programming for public cable access	Cable user fees
Downtown Service Fund	Promotion of Downtown economic development	Property taxes
Library Gift Fund	Gifts and donations received for the library	Gifts and donations
<u>Internal Service Funds</u>		
Vehicle Replacement Fund	Centrally managed vehicle replacement	Charges to General Fund
Fleet Maintenance Fund	Centrally managed fleet maintenance	Charges to General and Housing Funds
Computer Replacement Fund	Centrally managed computer replacement	Charges to General Fund



## ***NET ASSETS (FUND BALANCE)***

Net assets (fund balance) are basically the difference between revenues received and expenditures made in a given year plus any residual balance remaining at the end of the previous year. Total undesignated net assets are an accumulated cash balance. Part of the balance remains unused to meet the reserve recommendations of the North Carolina Local Government Commission. The remaining balance is available to be used for additional appropriations. The Town budgets anticipating that a combination of excess revenues in comparison with budget and reduced expenditures also in comparison with budget will leave a balance available for appropriation in the following year.

Town practices with regard to net assets include the following:

- The Town seeks to continue to maintain a financial reserve minimum of 8% to 12% of their unrestricted net assets consistent with the recommendations of the North Carolina Local Government Commission. The reserve is for cash flow, emergencies and opportunities.
- The Town seeks to maintain a level of net assets which is sufficient to retain its high bond ratings: Moody—AAA and Standard and Poors—AA+. Bonding agencies use the percentage of unrestricted net assets as a key indicator when assessing the Town’s creditworthiness.

<b>Governmental Fund</b>	
<b>Financial Assets</b>	Assets available for spending and not subject to legal limitations
	Assets subject to legal limitations
	Unavailable assets (e.g., long-term loans receivable)
	Reserved net assets (fund balance) <i>(not available for appropriation)</i>
	Liabilities normally expected to be paid for current financial resources
	Undesignated unreserved net assets <i>(available for appropriation)</i>
	Designated unreserved net assets (subject to tentative management plans) <i>(available for appropriation)</i>
	Reserved net assets (fund balance) <i>(not available for appropriation)</i>
	<b>Liabilities</b>
	<b>Net Assets (Fund Balance)</b>

# ***DEBT***

## ***INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND***

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The Town has the authority to finance purchases for major projects, buildings, renovations and major equipment. The underlying principal for this type of financing is that the public can and should pay for capital investments over a long time frame in order to spread the cost among citizens over time and to better match the expected usefulness of the capital purchase. This method enables governments to undertake large capital projects without having to pay cash for the projects at the time they take place.

The State of North Carolina allows local governments a number of methods to finance these sorts of purchases:

- General Obligation Bonds
- Two-thirds General Obligation Bonds
- Revenue Bonds
- Contract Installment Financing
- Certificates of Participation

### **ESSENTIALS**

*Town policy and practice limits annual general government debt service to 10% of total General Fund expenditures.*

*State statutes only allow debt issuance for capital expenditures.*

*Per State law, the Town's debt may not exceed 8% of the Town's assessed property valuation.*

*General obligation bonds are secured by the pledge of "full faith and credit" and taxing authority of the Town.*

### **General Obligation Bonds**

The issuance of General Obligation bonds (GO bonds) is the most commonly used financing method for the purchase of large capital equipment and for construction projects. Issuance of GO bonds requires approval by the public through a bond referendum and requires approval by the North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC). When approved GO bonds are issued, a local government pledges to repay the debt from any and all revenues available to the unit. This pledge is generally referred to as a pledge of the "full faith and credit" of the governmental unit, including a pledge of property tax revenue. Maturities on GO bonds are normally about 20 years. In North

# ***DEBT***

## ***INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND***

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Carolina, General Obligation bonds can be used only for capital expenditures and never for operating costs.

The basic rule on the amount of debt that may be issued by a local government in North Carolina is that the principal amount of debt may not exceed 8% of the value of the taxable property base in the unit.

### **Two-thirds GO Bonds**

There is a provision in North Carolina Statutes that allows units to issue bonds each year in an amount equal to two-thirds of the principal amount of debt retired in the previous year. These bonds may be issued without a referendum but must be approved by the LGC in the same manner as other debt financing methods. Because the cost of issuing GO bonds is about \$25,000 to \$30,000 per issue, it is generally more cost effective to issue two-thirds bonds only at the same time as another planned bond issuance, perhaps totaling several million dollars.

### **Revenue Bonds**

Revenue bonds are typically issued for enterprise operations, in which there is a stream of revenues in connection with an enterprise operation that is pledged to the repayment of the bonds. Examples include parking operations, water and sewer operations, electrical operations, etc. In the case of a revenue bond issuance, the revenues from the project operations are pledged only for repayment of bonds, and may not be used for other purposes. In order to obtain approval from the LGC for the issuance of revenue bonds, the LGC requires that a feasibility study be conducted by an independent, nationally recognized consulting firm, and that revenues from the project be 20% greater than total debt service costs and operating expenses of the project. The issuance of revenue bonds normally requires the use of an underwriting firm and involves substantial issuance cost.

In past years, the Town issued revenue bonds for off-street parking operations, including the purchase of parking lots 2 and 5 and for the James C. Wallace Parking Deck. In 1994, all of the Town's parking revenue bonds were replaced by Certificates of Participation.

### **Installment Contract Financing**

General Statute 160A-20 allows local governments to enter into installment contracts to finance the purchase of equipment and land, or for construction projects. Under this method of financing, the unit enters into a contract with a financial institution in which the financial institution provides funding for the purchase of equipment, land, or for construction projects. The financial institution maintains a security interest in the

# ***DEBT***

## ***INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND***

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equipment or project until the governmental units repays the loan over a specified maturity. For these contracts, local units pledge to pay the installments from any revenues available, but do not pledge the “full faith and credit” of the unit. Contracts under \$500,000 and less than a five-year maturity do not require approval by the LGC.

Installment contracts for equipment greater than \$500,000 or maturities over five years require approval by the LGC, except the purchase of vehicles and rolling stock which may be purchased in any amount without LGC approval. Installment contracts involving the purchase of land or buildings, and improvements to land or buildings require approval by the LGC regardless of the dollar amount or maturity involved.

The Town has used installment contract financing for the annual purchase of vehicles and computers, for land for a public works site and for capital renovations for existing Town buildings as a part of its proposed Capital Improvements Program.

### **Certificates of Participation**

General Statute 160A-20 also allows a local government unit to issue Certificates of Participation (COPS) which involve another form of installment contract financing. The certificates are similar to revenue bonds, except that the purchasers of the certificates are entitled to receive installment payments from any revenues available to the unit, not solely from the operation of the project financed with certificates. The “full faith and credit” of the government may not be pledged for repayment of certificates. Issuance of Certificates of Participation also normally requires the use of underwriters and involves substantial issuance costs.

In 1994, all of the Town’s outstanding Parking Revenue Bonds were replaced with Certificates of Participation. These certificates pledge to make installment payments on the certificates from any revenues available to the Town, and the pledge is not restricted to repayment only from parking revenues. The Town refinanced the Certificates of Participation in September 2003 to obtain a lower interest rate resulting in lower debt service payments.

### **Additional Debt Information**

Please refer to the Debt Section beginning on page 231 for additional information on the Town’s debt and bond ratings.

# ***CAPITAL PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND***

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The Capital Program is a 15-year financial plan for the Town's major capital and infrastructure needs. The Capital Program identifies capital needs, establishes priorities, identifies potential funding sources, and includes needs for which sources of funding have not been identified. Key sources for identifying capital needs include the 2000 Facility Condition Assessment, the Comprehensive Plan, Council Goals and Implementation Plan for 2004, special studies, and other ideas from the Council, citizens and staff.

The Capital Program is comprehensive in scope: It includes all identified capital projects and a range of funding sources, as well as projects that have been identified but for which funding is not available. It includes projects that are funded through the Town's Capital Improvements Fund, and also those projects that are funded through bonds, State and federal grants, and other sources. The Capital Program does not include the capital needs of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School System, the Orange Water and Sewer Authority, or the Orange Regional Landfill which was transferred to Orange County in 2000. Most projects funded by bonds, grants and other special funding sources are accounted for in Multi-Year Capital Project Funds, such as various capital projects funded from bonds, and are, therefore not included in the annual operating budget.

Please refer to the Capital Program section beginning on page 237 for additional information on the Town's Capital Improvements Fund.

# ***FUND STRUCTURE & BASIS OF BUDGETING***

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The accounts of the Town are organized on the basis of funds or account groups, each of which constitutes a separate accounting entity. The operations of each fund are accounted for by providing a separate set of self-balancing accounts reflecting its assets, liabilities, fund balance/retained earnings, revenues and expenditures/expenses. The funds of the Town are created because of the diverse nature of governmental operations and the necessity of complying with legal provisions. The Town has three broad fund categories: governmental, proprietary and fiduciary.

## **BASIS OF BUDGETING**

The budgets of general government type funds (for example, the General Fund, Housing and Debt Service Funds) are prepared on a modified accrual basis. Briefly, this means that obligations of the Town (for example, outstanding purchase orders) are budgeted as expenditures, but revenues are recognized only when they are measurable and available.

The Enterprise Funds (Transportation, Parking and Internal Service) also recognize expenditures as encumbrances when a commitment is made (e.g., through a purchase order). Revenues, on the other hand, are recognized when they are obligated to the Town (for example, charges for transportation services are recognized as revenue when service is provided).

In all cases (Enterprise Funds and General Governmental Funds) when goods and services are not received by year end, encumbrances evidenced by unfilled purchase orders lapse, but are normally reappropriated to the following year's budget through an amendment to the budget approved by the Town Council.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) shows the status of the Town's finances on the basis of "generally accepted accounting principles" (GAAP). In most cases this conforms to the way the Town prepares its budget. Exceptions are as follows:

- a. Compensated absence liabilities that are expected to be liquidated with expendable available financial resources are accrued as earned by employees (GAAP basis) as opposed to being expended when paid (Budget basis).
- b. General staff and administrative charges for the Transportation and Parking Funds are accounted for and funded by operating transfers into the General Fund from these funds on the Budget basis as opposed to a GAAP basis.
- c. Principal payments on long-term debt within the Enterprise Funds are applied to the outstanding liability on a GAAP basis, as opposed to being expended on a Budget basis.
- d. Capital outlays within the Enterprise Funds are recorded as assets on a GAAP basis and expended on a Budget basis.
- e. Depreciation expense is recorded on a GAAP basis only.

## ***FUND STRUCTURE & BASIS OF BUDGETING***

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One type of budget entry that is shown differently for budgetary purposes and GAAP is the purchase of an item using installment financing. The actual budget entries for an installment financing agreement can make it appear that the Town is paying twice for the same purchase, because there are two pairs of budget entries in the year that an installment financing takes place. The first pair gives the Town budget authority to make a certain purchase, for example, a fire truck, and receive the financing from a bank or other financial institution for the purchase. In the case of a fire truck costing \$250,000, the budgetary lines would show the following:

REVENUES	Financing Proceeds	\$250,000
EXPENDITURES	Capital Equipment	\$250,000

The second pair of budget entries allow for the first year repayment of the installment (or lease-purchase) debt. That set of budget entries shows the amount of the debt to be paid in the year and the source of the revenue that will provide the cash to make the payment. For the fire truck example, assuming that the Town secures financing for eight years at 5% and that the Town will make a payment for one-eighth the cost of the fire truck in the first year, the budgetary lines would show the interest and principal payment as following:

REVENUES	Appropriated Fund Balance (or other revenue source)	\$38,680
EXPENDITURES	Installment (lease/purchase) financing payment	\$38,680

If the Town made no further installment financing agreements, the Town would show the budgetary requirement for repaying the bank or other financial institution in each of the following seven years.

In addition to approving the budget authority for the above transactions, the Town Council would have to specifically approve each installment financing agreement.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report shows fund expenditures and revenues on both a GAAP basis and Budget basis for comparison purposes.

### **GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS**

Governmental funds are those which finance most governmental functions of the Town. The Town follows the modified accrual basis of accounting and budgeting for all governmental funds. Under this method, revenues are recorded as the amount becomes susceptible to accrual by becoming measurable

## ***FUND STRUCTURE & BASIS OF BUDGETING***

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and available to finance the Town's operations. Available means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. Expenditures are recorded when the related liability is incurred.

In applying the susceptible to accrual concept to intergovernmental revenues, the legal and contractual requirements of the numerous individual programs are used as guidance. There are, however, essentially two types of these revenues. In one, money must be expended on the specific purpose or project before any amounts will be paid to the Town; therefore, revenues are recognized when the expenditures are recorded. Major components of this type of revenue are grants and gas tax refunds. In the other, funds are virtually unrestricted as to purpose of expenditure and are revocable only for failure to comply with prescribed compliance requirements. These resources are reflected as revenues at the time of receipt or earlier if the susceptible to accrual criteria are met. Major revenues susceptible to accrual under this category are State-shared revenues.

Licenses and permits, charges for services and other revenues are recorded as revenues when received in cash because they are generally not measurable until actually received. Interest on investments is recorded as earned since it is both measurable and available.

The following are the Town's Governmental Fund Types:

General Fund - The General Fund is the general operating fund of the Town. It is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

Special Revenue Funds - Special Revenue Funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes. The Town's special revenue funds consist of the Public Housing Fund, the Community Development Entitlement Grant Projects Ordinance Fund, the Transit Grant Projects Ordinance Fund, the Downtown Service District Fund, the Cable Public Access Fund, Transitional Housing Fund, Revolving Acquisition Fund, the Housing Loan Trust Fund, the Land Trust Fund, and the Library Gift Fund.

Debt Service Fund - The Debt Service Fund is used to account for the payment of general obligation long-term debt principal, interest and related costs. Such payments are financed by recurring annual transfers from the General Fund. Payments of long-term debt associated with Enterprise Fund operations are shown in the Enterprise Funds themselves.

Capital Projects Funds - Capital Projects Funds are used to account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities (other than those financed by special revenue, proprietary funds and trust funds). The Town's four capital projects funds: the Capital Projects Ordinance Fund, the Capital Projects Fund, the Capital Improvements Fund and the Capital Reserve Fund. Only the Capital improvements Fund and Capital Reserve Fund are budgeted annually.



# ***FUND STRUCTURE & BASIS OF BUDGETING***

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## **PROPRIETARY FUND TYPES**

Enterprise Funds - Enterprise Funds are used to account for operations (a) that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises - where the intent of the governing body is that the costs (total expenses including depreciation) of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges; or (b) where the governing body has decided that periodic determination of revenues earned, expenses incurred and net income is appropriate for capital maintenance, public policy, management control, accountability or other purposes. The Town has two Enterprise Funds: the Transportation Fund and the Parking Facilities Fund. For budgeting purposes the Parking Facilities Fund is shown in two parts, On-Street Parking and Off-Street Parking.

The enterprise funds and the joint operation are accounted for using the accrual basis of accounting. The revenues of these funds are recognized when they are earned and expenses are recognized when they are incurred.

Internal Service Funds – Internal Service Funds are used to account for the financing of goods or services provided by one unit, or to other governmental units, on a cost-reimbursement basis.” The chief aim of an internal service fund is cost reimbursement including the exhaustion of fixed assets or “depreciation expense.” The Town has three Internal Service Funds: the Vehicle Replacement Fund, the Computer Replacement Fund and the Fleet Maintenance Fund.

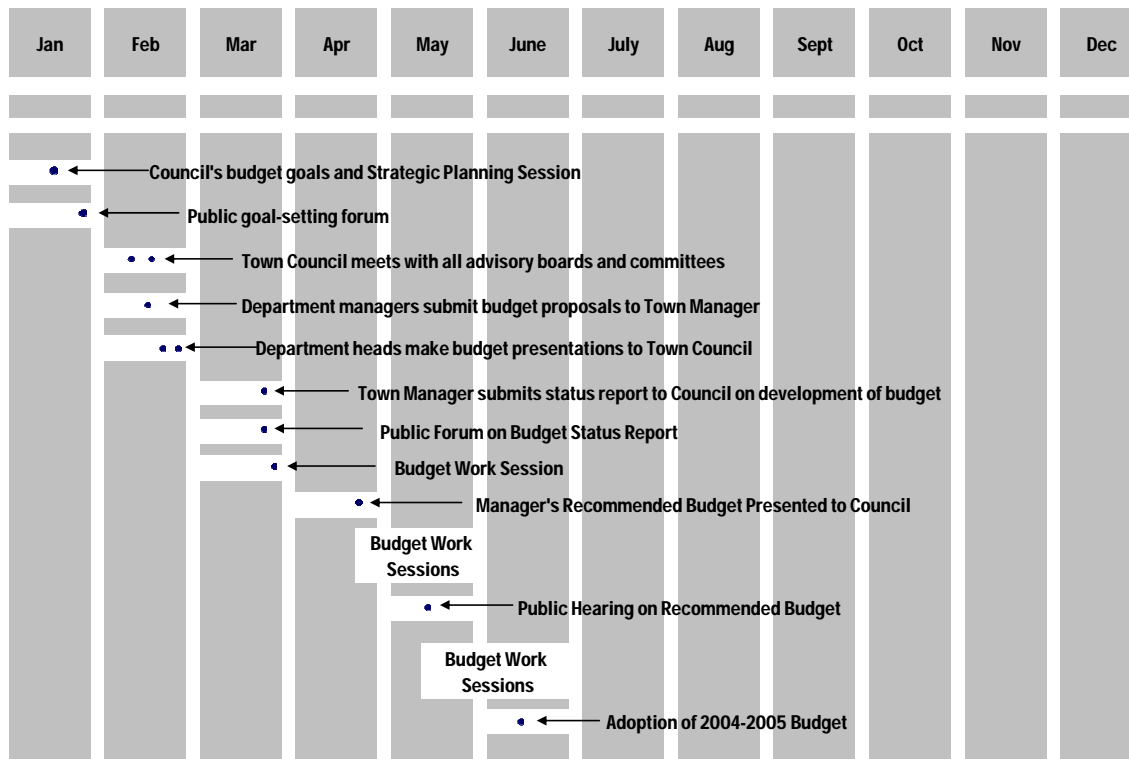
## **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The appropriations in the various funds are formally budgeted on a departmental or functional basis depending on the fund type. Changes of functions and total budgets of any fund require approval by the Town Council. Budgetary control is maintained at the individual budget object line item level (e.g., salaries, supplies, etc.). Neither an operational expenditure nor an encumbrance is processed when the transaction would result in an overrun of an individual line item budget.

## **DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS**

Departments may be further represented by divisions. In this document, each department or division summary contains a key objective, a budget summary by expenditure category, major offsetting revenues, major expenses, including capital outlay and an authorized full-time equivalent position count. For departments consisting of more than one division, a department summary precedes the department's division summaries.

# OVERVIEW OF BUDGET PROCESS



Budget preparation allows departments the opportunity to reassess goals and objectives and the means for accomplishing them. Even though the budget may be heard by the Mayor and Town Council in May and adopted in June, its preparation begins at least six months prior, with projection of Town reserves, revenues, expenditure limit requirements, and financial capacity. It is with this “groundwork” that departmental expenditure requests are made and subsequently reviewed.

## Financial Capacity Phase

Forecasting is an integral part of our decision making process. Both long-range and short-range projections are prepared. The Town’s Long-Range Financial Projections are updated annually to assess not only current financial condition given existing Town programs, but future financial capacity, given long range plans and objectives.

A five-year financial forecast is prepared for each major operating fund projecting both expenditures and revenues and their fiscal impact on the respective funds.

## Policy/Strategy Phase

The Town Council’s goals and directives set the tone for the development of the budget. Shortly after the budget is adopted for the next year, the Council meets, as early as August, but not later than January, to identify priorities, issues, and projects impacting the next fiscal year budget. In January of each year, the Council holds a strategic planning meeting to identify key policy issues that will provide the direction and framework of the budget. The Manager and Finance Director provide an updated short- and long-range financial forecast to assist the Council in providing budget policy and direction for the upcoming budget.

# ***OVERVIEW OF BUDGET PROCESS***

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Aside from the Council's own objectives, Town departments identify and discuss their policy issues with the Town Manager throughout the year. In December each year, a budget meeting led by the Manager provides budgetary directions and guidelines to the departments. Participants also help formulate and identify internal and overall budget objectives for the coming year.

The meeting includes discussion of town wide goals and objectives, budgeting guidelines for the operating and capital budgets, timelines, an overview of fiscal constraints, and resources available for allocation. The Budget Directives and Instructions distributed at these meetings are designed to assist the departments in preparing all budget requests and forms.

## **Needs Assessment Phase**

The departments have an opportunity to assess current conditions, programs, and needs. During this phase, departments are encouraged to thoroughly review all programs and services assessing their value and priority to the citizens of the Town. Programs are examined for possible reductions, eliminations, or trade-offs.

Additionally, departments reassess service level standards and workload indicators. They then attempt to provide the "best fit" of resource allocation with service and workload estimates. From this process, they prepare preliminary departmental budget requests that are submitted to the Manager in February.

## **Review/Development Phase**

Within the framework of the Town's

financial capacity, the Town Council and Town Manager review priorities and departmental needs assessments; review budget requests; and a preliminary townwide operating budget takes shape. The departments initially prepare and submit base budgets. In addition, department heads submit proposals for program changes and budget additions or deletions.

## **Implementation/Adoption Phase**

After the Town Council's initial budget planning session in January, the Council holds an initial budget public forum to receive input, information and requests from citizens on any aspect of the Town's budget for the coming fiscal year, including the Town's operating and capital improvement budget. The forum also solicits comments on the Town's use of federal Community Development funds, the Town Public Housing program and use of federal and State grants for housing, public transit and Community development activities.

Following the initial public forum, the Council holds budget work sessions in February with each of the Town's appointed advisory boards and commissions to receive input on budgetary and policy issues for the coming year.

In February, each Departmental Budget Request is reviewed in detail with the Manager, Deputy Manager, Assistant Manager, Finance Director and Human Resources Director to review service and funding levels for each Department as part of the total budget and to begin work on recommendations for the Council's consideration.

# ***OVERVIEW OF BUDGET PROCESS***

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In February and March, the Council also holds a budget work session in which all Town Department Directors present their preliminary budget requests and discuss budget goals, policies and departmental needs with the Council. In this session, the Town Council provides further direction to the Manager and Departments on development of the budget for the coming year.

After the initial budget work sessions in February and March each year, the Manager presents to the Council in late March a status report on development of the operating and capital budgets and on preliminary recommendations for the use of all federal and State grant funds for housing programs, public transportation and community development activities.

The status report provides preliminary estimates of revenue and expenditures for the upcoming budget, identifies the most important budget issues for the Council and provides an assessment of how the preliminary revenue and expenditure estimates may impact the tax rate for the coming year. The presentation of this report is provided at a public forum of the Council in which interested citizens and community groups provide budgetary information, feedback or make funding requests to the Town Council. In March and early April, the Council may hold additional budget work sessions as desired, providing further direction to the Manager and staff regarding a recommended budget.

In accord with North Carolina State law, the Manager is required to submit a recommended budget to the Town Council. The Manager's Recommended

operating and capital budget is submitted to the Town Council in late April, and includes proposed revenue and expenditure levels and recommended changes in the tax rate for the coming year. Submittal of the recommended budget is followed by several budget work sessions as desired by the Council.

A public hearing as required by law on the recommended budget is held in early May, followed by additional budget working sessions held by the Town Council.

In accord with State law, the Town Council must adopt a final budget and set the tax rate for the next fiscal year by June 30 each year or must adopt an interim budget providing temporary appropriations until a permanent budget is adopted. After adoption of the budget, management control of the budget is maintained by conducting budget performance reviews at least quarterly throughout the fiscal year. The reviews are aimed at examining expenditure patterns, comparing them against spending patterns, and recommending corrective action to be taken during the year. Additionally, detailed financial records are maintained to evaluate actual revenues and expenditures against the budget.

## **Budget Amendments**

Changes among departmental or functional budgets or a change in the total budget of any fund require approval by the Town Council. The government's department heads, with the approval of the Town Manager, may make transfers of an appropriation within a department.

# ***OVERVIEW OF BUDGET PROCESS***

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## **Budget Roles and Responsibilities**

Every employee plays a role in budgeting—whether in its formulation, preparation, implementation, administration, or evaluation. Ultimately, of course, the Department Head, through the Town Manager, is accountable to the Town Council for the performance of departmental personnel in meeting specific objectives within allocation resource limits. Actual budget preparation responsibility can be identified more specifically:

1. Division and Department Heads are responsible for reviewing, modifying and assembling their cost data into a departmental request package and potential budget plan. Department heads critically evaluate all requests, prioritize, and submit only those requests which are consistent with Council policies, administrative direction and departmental objectives. The preparation of the budget requests, goals and objectives should coincide with stated annual goals.

2. The Finance Director and Finance staff within the Department are responsible for (a) preparing short and long range revenue and expenditure forecasts, (b) reviewing departmental budgets with individual department heads or staff, (c) analyzing, summarizing, and making recommendations on the budget requests to the Deputy Manager, Assistant Manager and the Town Manager, and (d) reviewing the linkage between budget requests and overall budget goals and policies.

3. The Deputy Manager and the Assistant Manager are responsible for reviewing the departmental operating and CIP requests within the context of the Council priorities, Town Manager directives, and budget goals for their respective groups and submitting their recommendations for review by the Town Manager.

4. The Town Manager is responsible for reviewing the total financial program and formulating the town-wide Recommended Budget to be submitted to the Town Council for adoption.

5. The Town Council is responsible for the review of the Manager's Recommended Budget and approval of a final budget.

# ***BUDGET GUIDELINES & PRACTICES***

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*The budgetary guidelines and practices enumerated below outline a general framework of budgetary goals and objectives regarding the operating budget, debt service, capital expenditures, reserves, and financial reporting. They provide standards against which current budgetary performance can be measured, as well as proposals for future program evaluation.*

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## **OPERATING BUDGET**

### **Guideline**

### **Comment**

Current revenues will be sufficient to support current operating expenditures.

The Town seeks to use stable, annually recurring revenues to pay for costs which tend to continue from year to year, and seeks to avoid using one-time revenues for annually recurring costs.

Financial systems are maintained to monitor expenditures, revenues and program performance on a continuing basis.

The Town maintains a computerized financial system on a continuing basis that monitors and compares all actual revenues and expenditures to approved budget estimates and appropriations.

Revenues and expenditures are projected for a five-year period and updated annually.

The Town's annual budget includes a five-year forecast for the revenues and expenditures of the Town's major operating funds, and monitors and updates the forecast at periodic intervals during the fiscal year.

## **DEBT SERVICE**

Long-term debt is not issued to finance current operations.

In accordance with North Carolina State law, long-term debt may be issued only to finance capital improvements and capital purchases over the life of the improvements or equipment. Deficit financing for current operations is not permitted by State law.

# ***BUDGET GUIDELINES & PRACTICES***

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## **Guideline**

General Obligation Bonds will be issued to finance capital improvements and equipment at moderate levels that will not exceed the Town's resources and capacity for repaying the debt.

## **Comment**

General Obligation bonds are normally issued to finance capital improvements as desired by the Town Council and Town citizens at levels that maintain financial stability and require moderate and stable tax rate increases. Consistent with this guideline, the Town strives to maintain annual debt service payments totaling less than 10% of General Fund expenditures in a given year. This conservative guideline assists the Town in maintaining its Triple A (AAa) bond rating.

## **CAPITAL EXPENDITURES**

Consistent with the policy of the Town Council, a fifteen-year capital improvements program is developed and updated during the annual budget process, including anticipated funding sources.

Annually the Town prepares a fifteen-year Capital Improvements Program Budget that summarizes current capital improvements projects and future capital improvement needs. This program includes ongoing pay-as-you-go financing, installment contract financing, current and proposed long-term bond-financed projects, and projects funded by grants and miscellaneous funding sources.

Capital projects financed through the issuance of bonds are financed for a period not to exceed the expected useful life of the project.

Consistent with general State law and guidelines in North Carolina, general obligation bonds are normally issued for a period of 20 years for capital improvements that extend over the same 20-year period.

The Town coordinates development of the capital improvements budget with development of the operating budget. Future operating costs associated with the new capital improvements should be projected and included in the operating budget forecasts.

Operating costs of projects included in the Capital Improvements Program and budget are incorporated into the Town's operating budget annually, and are reflected in the Town's annual five-year forecast for its major operating funds.

# ***BUDGET GUIDELINES & PRACTICES***

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## **Guideline**

The Town strives to maintain all its physical assets at a level adequate to protect the Town's capital investment and to minimize future maintenance and replacement costs.

## **Comment**

The Town strives to maintain its capital investment by addressing future maintenance and replacement costs in its fifteen-year capital improvements program. Both pay-as-you-go financing and installment financing are used to address capital maintenance needs. When deferrals of capital maintenance are proposed due to unusual budgetary constraints, the amount of deferrals are specifically identified and limited to the extent practical.

## **NET ASSET RESERVES**

The Town seeks to continue to maintain its financial reserve position consistent with the recommendations of the North Carolina Local Government Commission to reserve a minimum of 8% to 12% of General Fund expenditures for cash flow considerations and emergencies.

The Town's annual budget and revenue and expenditure recommendations are developed and designed to ensure that its financial position and reserve levels are adequate to retain reserve levels recommended by the North Carolina Local Government Commission for the General Fund and other major operating funds, including the Transportation and Parking enterprise funds. The Town's current balances are consistent with the minimum recommendation. The Town seeks to increase these reserve levels as the expenditure levels increase in each fund to maintain a constant reserve percentage.



# ***BUDGET GUIDELINES & PRACTICES***

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## **FINANCIAL REPORTING**

### **Guideline**

The Town's accounting and financial reporting systems will be maintained in conformance with current generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and standards of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Consistent with State law, an annual audit will be performed by an independent public accounting firm with subsequent issuance of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Full disclosure will be provided in the general financial statements and all bond representations.

### **Comment**

The Town participates in the accounting and budgeting awards programs of the association, receiving the Certificate of Excellence and Distinguished Budget Award in 2003-04 and in past years. The Town plans to continue participation in these programs annually.

The Town prepares a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that receives an unqualified opinion by an independent accounting firm each year. As required by State law, the annual report is submitted to the N. C. Local Government Commission staff for a detailed review of compliance with Commission recommendations and guidelines and compliance with applicable accounting and financial reporting standards.

## ***BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS***

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Major issues affecting Town revenues for the 2004-05 Budget include the likely stability of the projected State budget and its affect on local revenues, anticipated continued slow growth in the Orange County economy and the indirect effect of funding and growth decisions of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Federal budget decisions also have a major effect on the Chapel Hill budget, particularly in the areas of transportation and housing.

The Recommended Budget incorporates the following assumptions:

- Economic conditions in North Carolina will continue to improve slowly next year.
- The Town will receive full State-shared revenues next year.
- The property tax base will increase about \$140 million: the total base is estimated to be about \$4.4 billion next year.
- We estimate that the Town's revenue from the local 1% and older ½ % sales taxes will increase by about 3% from estimated receipts in the current year.
- Revenue from the fuels tax (Powell Bill funds) for street maintenance next year will remain about the same as this year, about \$1.3 million.
- Interest rates and interest income will begin to improve next year.
- Carol Woods Retirement Center, now tax exempt, may not continue to make a donation to the Town.
- Fare free bus service will be continued.

# ***BUDGET GOALS***

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## **Long-term Goals of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Town's primary long-term and short-term goals are stated in the revised Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town Council in the spring of 2000 and updated in May 2003. The Town's Comprehensive Plan is organized around 12 major themes which together form a strategy for Chapel Hill's future. These themes are:

- Maintain the Urban Services Area/Rural Buffer Boundary
- Participate in the regional planning process
- Conserve and protect existing neighborhoods
- Conserve and protect the natural setting of Chapel Hill
- Identify areas where there are creative development opportunities
- Encourage desirable forms of non-residential development
- Create and preserve affordable housing opportunities
- Cooperatively plan with the University of North Carolina
- Work toward a balanced transportation system
- Complete the bikeway / greenway / sidewalk systems
- Provide quality community facilities and services
- Develop strategies to address fiscal issues

Taken together, the major themes show a pattern of commitment to community involvement in directing government investment in community development and in services.

## **Budget Goals for 2004-05**

We believe that the 2004-05 budget is consistent with the long-term goals adopted by the Council. The Budget also is consistent with the following short-term goals:

- Basic Town services should be maintained.
- Good quality, necessary and adequate services should be provided at the lowest tax rate.
- Fund Balance should be maintained at the current level, less the one-time use proposed by the Council.
- Employees should be retained and the Town should continue to invest in the maintenance of employee skills, knowledge and abilities as a key community resource.
- Funding for maintenance and capital projects should be increased to a reasonable level that adequately maintains Town facilities.
- Fare free transportation services should be retained in 2004-05.
- Improved stormwater management services should be provided.