

PORTLAND TIF POLICY

November 20, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development program authorized under state law to support municipal projects. The TIF program allows municipalities to provide financial assistance to local economic development projects and programs – from infrastructure, municipal economic development programs and staff, to business expansions - by using new property taxes that result from new commercial or residential investment associated with the corresponding increase in property value.

Portland TIF Policy supports investment in municipal economic development programs, infrastructure investment (which is generally through the establishment of area wide or neighborhood TIF districts) and individual project site specific TIF districts to support either infrastructure or individual private project financing needs.

The City is committed to invest in infrastructure located within the public rights-of-way that encourage economic development. Use of TIF investment to invest in infrastructure recognizes the savings which occurs through the TIF Program tax sheltering benefits.

“Infrastructure” is defined, but not limited to: traffic upgrades, public parking facilities, roadway improvements, lighting, sidewalks, water and sewer utilities, storm water management improvements and placing above ground overhead electric and telecommunications lines underground.

II. STATE TIF LIMITATION

There are acreage and value caps limitations for municipalities to establish TIF along with term limits. Term limits include bonds which may be issued for a maximum of 20 years (anticipation notes for three years). TIF districts may be designated for a maximum of 30 years.

III. PURPOSE

The primary purposes of the TIF Policy include:

- A. To support Portland Economic Development and Housing Plans and Policies;
- B. To stimulate expansion of the City’s commercial and industrial tax base;
- C. To stimulate new affordable and market rate housing investment;
- D. To retain and create quality employment;
- E. To support Portland’s Capital Improvement Plan; and,
- F. To establish standards upon which the City Council will authorize TIF.

IV. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The three primary general principles for the City Council to establish TIF districts include:

A. Investment

Minimum Real Property Investment. A minimum of \$1 million in new taxable investment property value for commercial and industrial development and \$500,000 for affordable housing development is needed to qualify for a TIF. This is the minimum amount which makes practical sense to consider use of the TIF program due to the amount of new municipal property tax revenue generated from new private investment.

B. Jobs Associated with Commercial and Industrial Development

Applicants for TIF participation will be required to provide a plan outlining the number and quality of jobs retained or created associated with each TIF district. While there is not a specific formula for the numbers of jobs associated with the amount of TIF financial assistance, the number and quality of the jobs will be taken into consideration for each TIF district. It is recognized that housing projects do not create many permanent jobs.

C. Maximize Tax Sheltering Benefits

A municipality's total equalized assessed value is used to calculate General Purpose Aid to Education (subsidy), State Revenue Sharing (subsidy) and County taxes (expense). When a municipality's equalized assessed value increases, State Aid for Education decreases, municipal revenue sharing decreases, and the municipality pays a greater portion of County taxes. TIF allows municipalities to "shelter" new value resulting from private investment from the calculation of its State subsidies (education and revenue sharing) and County taxes. In other words, specific municipal shelter benefits, for the term of the TIF, include:

- 1) No reduction in State aid for education,
- 2) No reduction in municipal revenue sharing and
- 3) No increase in County taxes.

Annually, the Council Committee with jurisdiction over housing and community development and City Council will evaluate available TIF district capacity related to State acreage and value limitations to determine whether existing TIF districts need amending and/or new TIF district establishment. Scheduled public infrastructure investments included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan will inform decisions about adjustments to existing TIF districts or establishment of new TIF districts.

V. APPROACH, POLICY, and TERM REQUIREMENTS

Must meet or exceed the below requirements.

A. Approach

There are three approaches to consider establishing TIF districts. They include:

- 1) ***Municipal Economic Development Programs funded directly through a pay-as-you-go approach.***

Examples of municipal economic development programs include paying for economic development staff, annual funding to Creative Portland for city marketing/branding, and other TIF law allowable activities.

- 2) ***Area wide TIF districts financed by City Bond/Debt Issuance***

Issuance of municipal general obligation bonds or limited obligation bonds is a mechanism that may be used to fund a TIF district program. Allowable uses are spelled out in state TIF law. Generally, municipalities will issue debt to cover the cost of infrastructure investment.

- 3) ***Individual Site Specific TIF districts utilizing Credit Enhancement Agreements (CEAs)***

A CEA is a contract between a municipality and developer to assist an individual development project by using a percentage or all of the tax revenue generated by the investment to pay certain authorized project costs which could include site specific infrastructure or private individual project financing needs. Allowable project costs are spelled out in state TIF law.

B. Policy for the Three Approaches

1. **Policy for Municipal Economic Development Programs.**

Requires annual review and City Council financial appropriations.

2. **Policy for Area wide TIF District Locations (for City Bond/Debt Issuance)**

- a) Area wide TIF will be established for infrastructure investment which has applications beyond one individual project.
- b) City TIF emphasis will be placed upon the following general "Priority Revitalization Areas" to support commercial development, housing development, redevelopment, or to support buildings in need to redevelopment, address blight or historic preservation:

- Affordable housing projects off peninsula;
- Riverside Street commercial and industrial zoned areas;
- Forest Avenue corridor from I-295 to Woodfords Corner;
- Washington Avenue corridor from Congress Street to I-295;
- Portland Technology Park ;
- Areas in which future significant wastewater and/or stormwater infrastructure investments are planned;
- West Commercial Street vacant property;
- Libbytown;
- St. Johns Street Valley;
- Other areas based upon scheduled public infrastructure investment included in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan.

The above list of general priority revitalization areas serve as guides to establish specific boundaries for TIF districts at time of district establishment.

- c) Market Rate Housing. Market rate rental housing projects must be located in priority revitalization areas to stimulate housing investment for the purpose of attracting 24/7 pedestrian activity. Pursuant to State Law, TIF for condominium projects are not allowed.
- d) Affordable Housing. Affordable Housing TIF (AHTIF) may be designated on an area wide or site specific basis.

The relevant City Council Committee will complete an annual assessment of housing needs and priorities. This assessment will include a determination regarding designation of an area wide AHTIF. Site specific AHTIF requests submitted by developers will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Area wide or site specific AHTIF designations must address an identified community need.

State law requires that at least 25% of the district area must be suitable for residential use, development must be primarily residential, and at least 1/3 of the units must be for households at or below 120% of area median income which allows for individual mixed income projects or area wide affordable housing TIF districts.

Allowable uses of AHTIF revenues are defined by State law.

- e) City preference is to invest in area wide public infrastructure TIF districts versus establishing individual private site specific TIF districts.

- f) Area wide TIF districts also should seek to maximize the benefit of downtown and transit oriented development (TOD) districts which are exempt from State TIF law for acreage and value limitations.
- g) Terms for area wide TIF districts will be considered for up to 100% of new tax revenue and upwards of thirty (30) years, the maximum allowed by State law, due to the long-term need to invest in neighborhood infrastructure.

NOTE 1: As of this Amended TIF Policy date, there are two existing area wide TIF Districts, i.e., Bayside and Waterfront TIF Districts.

NOTE 2: As of this Amended TIF Policy date, there also exists two Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District, namely the Thompson Point TOD TIF District and the Downtown TOD TIF District to support new or expanded transit services and improved transit connections between the Portland Transportation Center, Jetport and Downtown.

3. Policy for Individual Site Specific TIF Districts Utilizing Credit Enhancement Agreements (CEAs)

- a) CEAs for individual site specific TIF districts will be considered for investment in infrastructure or project financing need and cannot be applied to any agreed upon public infrastructure improvements associated with a City Council approved conditional rezone agreement. Additional provisions related to CEAs include:

- i) City Green Building Code

Compliance with the City's Green Building Code is required when TIF assistance is provided to individual private project CEAs.

- ii) Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing TIF (AHTIF) may be designated on an area wide or site specific basis. Developments are encouraged to promote economic diversity.

The City Council Committee will complete an annual assessment of housing needs and priorities. This assessment will include a determination regarding designation of an area wide AHTIF. Site specific AHTIF requests submitted by developers will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Area wide or site specific AHTIF designations must address an identified community need.

State law requires that at least 25% of the district area must be suitable for residential use, development must be primarily residential, and at least 1/3 of the units must be for households at or below 120% of area median income which allows for individual mixed income projects or area wide AHTIF districts.

Allowable uses of AHTIF revenues are defined by State law.

(iii) State Prevailing Wage Requirement

Any firms employed in the construction phase of a TIF-assisted project must compensate all employees the current wage rates and fringe benefits as required under applicable state prevailing wage law under 26 M.R.S.A. §1306, or Portland City Ordinance Ch. 33, §33-1 to 33-12, whichever is greater.

City staff shall provide to the relevant City Council Committee an annual update on:

- a) the impact of this prevailing wage requirements on CEAs;
- b) feasibility of construction firms to pay prevailing wages and benefits; and
- c) compliance with this section.

(iv) Equal Employment Opportunities and Nondiscrimination

The developer and its contractors employed in the construction phase of a TIF-assisted project shall adhere to a policy of non-discrimination in all employment actions, practices, policies, procedures, phases, and conditions of employment. All employment-related decisions (including but not limited to hiring, discharge, transfers, promotions, discipline, training, job opportunities, and wage and salary levels) will be made without discrimination based on an individual's race or color, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry or national origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, genetic information, previous assertion of a claim or right under Maine's Workers' Compensation Act, previous actions taken protected under Maine's Whistleblowers' Protection Act, or any other protected group status as defined by applicable law. Provisions in applicable laws providing for bona fide occupational qualifications, business necessity, or age limitations will be adhered to by the developer and its contractors where appropriate. This policy shall not be construed to prohibit any employment action or policy which is required by federal law, rule or executive order.

b) Applicants for CEA participation must demonstrate and pay the following:

i) Financial Necessity.

The applicant must demonstrate the City's participation is financially necessary in order for the project to proceed.

ii) Financial Capacity.

The applicant must demonstrate financial capacity to support their project.

iii) Fees

A financial underwriting analysis will be conducted by a third party on all projects requesting CEA participation. Applicants for CEA assistance will be responsible for reimbursing the City for all project third party legal and financial underwriting costs.

C. Terms for CEA Projects

1) Maximum Percentages.

A maximum average percentage of 65% for the entire term associated with individual project CEAs. Notwithstanding the previous sentence, the maximum average percentage for the entire term associated with individual project CEAs for affordable housing shall be 75%. For the purposes of this policy, the term affordable housing shall be defined as in "V. Approach, Policy, and Term Requirements" Section B(2)(d) (Affordable Housing) of the Portland TIF Policy.

2) Maximum Number of Years.

Up to twenty (20) years to match individual private sector commercial financing terms; for Affordable Housing projects, up to thirty (30) years. The term of a TIF may start upon agreed trigger event, such as an increased assessed value. This would be included in a CEA on that negotiated triggering event.

3) Use of Maine Services for CEA Projects Encouraged.

VI. TIF APPLICATION AND ADMINISTRATION PROCESS

A. Application Information and Contact.

The Economic Development Department and the Housing and Community Development Division (for affordable housing projects) handle all TIF inquires and processes requests for TIF. An applicant must submit a letter to either the Economic Development Department for commercial projects or the Housing and Community Development Division for affordable housing projects outlining the proposed project, including TIF project financial information, a plan outlining both the number of permanent and construction jobs associated with the proposed project, as well as a demonstrated ability to meet the requirements under Section B(3)(a) of this policy.

B. Approval Process.

There is a two step approval process which includes obtaining a recommendation from the City Council Committee and City Council approval. Two meetings (or readings) by the City Council are needed. The City Council vote on the TIF occurs at the second meeting.

C. Post-Construction Report to City Council.

The Economic Development Department and the Housing and Community Development Division shall provide a post-construction report to the City Council Committee and City Council regarding each TIF-assisted project which shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the adherence to Section (V)(B)(3)(a) of this policy.

D. Annual Report to City Council.

The Economic Development Department and the Housing and Community Development Division shall provide annual reports to the City Council Committee and City Council regarding TIF district activity.