

Guidelines for Project Approval and Implementation

By Shelby County Board of Commission resolution, it is the responsibility of the IT Steering Committee (ITSC) to review all IT projects requiring Shelby County Commission approval. These are both capital projects and any operating budget items categories.¹

Maintenance Items (Operating and Maintenance (O&M))

IT related maintenance requiring Shelby County Commission approval are to be presented to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for review. The CIO will determine if the maintenance was:

- Continuation of a previously approved contract within contract renewal parameters
- Continuation of a previously approved contract outside of contract renewal parameters
- Upgrade of an existing system
- New maintenance

Software as a Service (Cloud Solutions) or Leasing Solutions (CIP or O&M)

Projects whose initial outlay may be less than the current Shelby County Commission requirement for approval but the total contracted amount exceeds this amount within a three year period should also be reviewed by the IT Steering Committee.

CIP Assumptions

It should be assumed that any new, approved project will be placed in the years 3 to 5 of the IT Capital Improvement Project (CIP) plan. Only in extreme circumstances will a new project be placed earlier than year 3.

Outline of Steps for CIP Project Review

- Requestor will submit a CIP summary of the project, estimated cost and requested year (should assume it will be placed in year 3 to year 5)
- The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will add the requested project to a list of potential IT CIP projects
- The CFO will provide a list of requested projects to the ITSC to be reviewed by the IT Project Review Sub-Committee
- At a designated date and time the requestor will present the project and appropriate documentation to the IT Project Review Sub-Committee
- The IT Project Review Committee will review all projects requested and will rank each project by merit and present these findings to ITSC for approval
- The CFO in consultation with the CIO, IT Steering Chairman and the IT Project Review Committee Chair may modify the IT CIP plan based on availability of funds and priorities. Revised CIP Plan will be circulated to all members.

¹ The check lists assumes that since the project is expected to be of substantial cost and that some type of vendor will be involved, an RFP or bid will need to be written and that the Commission will need to approve a contract. As projects evolve, however, this may not always be the case and the CIO and BRM will assist you in modifying the checklists to fit your situation.

Project Initiation

Project Idea and Preliminary Charter

At the beginning of any project, it is important to discuss the idea with supervisors, the department head, division director and or the elected official. If the idea has support, a preliminary charter or mandate should be developed to begin to shape the idea. This preliminary document considered the preliminary charter or mandate should be approved by the appropriate official to allow for time to be spent developing the project. As the basic information has been gathered about the project the executive (Project Sponsor) will request that the CIO help to develop the appropriate documents for the scope of the project. Additionally, the CIO will work to help identify other potential stakeholders who have similar requirements or needs.

Project Initiation

It is important that the Project Sponsor, Project Manager and the CIO work through as many issues as possible before presenting to the ITSC.

It is important that the appropriate level of documentation be provided to the ITSC. It will be unlikely that a project not properly planned and documented will be recommended for approval.

Submission to the ITSC

The documents developed in the initial phase will be presented to the Project Review Committee (PRC). Each member of the PRC will review the project through the Project Investment Score Form as to the overall value to the county (merit), risk, and the return on investment (cost benefit analysis). Mandated projects will have a priority and will automatically have a higher value score.

Project Investment Score (Example)

Project Investment Score Analysis

Total Score	If less than 20	Reject or move to year 5
Cost/Benefit Analysis (ROI)	If no benefits or savings shown	Consider rejection

CIP Rankings

Rankings for the purposes of scheduling projects by fiscal year should be considered by the return on investment (benefits or costs), Total score value to the county (which incorporates the risk of failure).

Sample rankings

Rank	Description	ROI	Total Score
1	Widget System Replacement	(\$300,000)	70
2	Sprocket Application Development	\$200,000	75
3	Gadget Enhancement	\$200,000	70

From the chart above note that even though the Sprocket project had a higher total score the Widget project had the highest ranking since it was able to document hard savings to the County.

Planning

Once a project has been approved by the IT Steering Committee, a full project plan will be developed by the Project Manager. This plan will be “right sized” to fit the scope and size of the project.

The CIO and BRM will assist the Project Manager in the development of these documents.

RFP Process

In anticipation of sending an RFP out for vendor responses, the Project Manager will gather the requirements of all of the stakeholders. The Project Manager will then document the requirements and have the stakeholders review and approve the requirements and their rankings. The Project Manager will develop a RFP and the methodology or evaluation the responses.

The RFP will be submitted to Purchasing for review and send it to potential vendors. When the RFP responses are provided by the vendors, the Project Manager will gather a committee that includes the stakeholders and at least one ITS representative to separately evaluate the merits of the responses based on the previously developed criteria. After this has been accomplished the pricing of the vendor responses will be reviewed. If two responses have been evaluated nearly equally the lower price will win. If a response was ranked much higher than the next the responses will prevail over the price (There will always be exceptions.).

The CFO will review the winning response and compare it to the original estimated cost. If the prices are higher, and it is a CIP the CFO may be required to push the project out farther than originally decided or may have to put the project on hold for further review by the ITSC. Any adjustments to the Project Plan should occur at this time with the Project Sponsor, Stakeholders, ITSC, CIO and CFO as deemed necessary will approve the changes.

At this time the vendor and Project Manager will begin to develop a contract based on the RFP response. The CIO will assist in this process. The County Attorney will review and approve the contract. The Sponsor will submit the contract to the Commission for approval, the ITSC Chairperson as well as the CIO will provide any necessary support in this process. The Final Recommendation Packet will be part of the documents submitted to the commission.

Executing / Monitoring and Controlling

The Project Manager will review and enhance the Project Plan and work with the vendor and the CIO to develop milestones, as to when and how much the vendor will be paid for progressive accomplishments.

As the project begins, the Project Manager will then go through an iterative process, providing regular reports to the Project Sponsor, ITSC, Stakeholders and CIO regarding the progress or the lack thereof. As milestones are completed and the project draws to an end then testing will begin and additional iterative cycles will continue.

Closing

As the close of the project draws near, the Project Manager will develop Project Closure Documents.

The CIO will help the Project Manager to “right size” the documents and in preparing the Project Review Report to Stakeholders, Project Sponsor and the ITSC. Depending on the type of project this report may also need to be presented to the Commission and or the Mayor.

The project goes into production and is monitored to determine if the goals of the project are being accomplished. This evaluation will be presented to the ITSC.

Post-Implementation Review

When conducting the review, include the following activities:

- **Conduct a gap analysis.**
 - Review the project charter to evaluate how closely the project results match the original objectives.
 - Review the expected deliverables (including documentation) and ensure either that these have been delivered to an acceptable level of quality, or that an acceptable substitute is in place.
 - If there are gaps, how will these be closed?
- **Determine whether the project goals were achieved.**
 - Is the deliverable functioning as expected?
 - Are error rates low enough, and is it a good fit for the purpose?
 - Is it functioning well, and in a way that will adjust smoothly to future operating demands?
 - Are users adequately trained and supported? And are there enough confident, skilled people in place?
 - Are the necessary controls and systems in place, and are they working properly?
 - What routine activities are needed to support the project's success?
 - If there are problems here, how will these be addressed?
 - How does the end result compare with the original project plan, in terms of quality, schedule and budget?
- **Determine the satisfaction of stakeholders.**
 - Were the end users' needs met?
 - Is the project sponsor satisfied?
 - What are the effects on the client or end user?
 - If key individuals aren't satisfied, how should this be addressed?
- **Determine the project's costs and benefits.**
 - What were the total final costs?
 - What will it cost to operate the solution?
 - What will it cost to support the solution in the future?
 - How do the costs compare with the benefits achieved?
 - If the project hasn't delivered a sufficiently large return, how can this be improved?
- **Identify areas of further development.**
 - Have all of the expected benefits been achieved? If not, what is needed to achieve them?
 - Are there opportunities for further training and coaching that will maximize results?
 - Could you make further changes, which would deliver even more value?
 - Are there any other additional benefits that can be achieved?
- **Identify lessons learned.**
 - How well were the projects deliverables assessed, and how well were timescales and costs assessed?
 - What went wrong, why did these things go wrong, and how could these problems be avoided next time?
 - What went well, and needs to be learned from?

A. Project initiation check list for all new IT projects (CIP and O&M) (Requestor Responsibilities)

<input type="checkbox"/>	1.	Has the potential project been discussed with your Business Relation Manager (BRM)?
		With the assistance of the BRM, develop the necessary documents to fit the size and scope of the project. An IT Project Manager with specialized skills may be assigned to you.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.	Have the Preliminary Project Plan documents been completed?
		<i>Have you identified that the project will do at least one of the following?</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Save Money?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost Avoidance?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhance Revenue?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Save Staff time or improve Staff efficiencies?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mandated requirement?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other?
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.	Have you documented justifications from item 2 above?
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.	Has the Project Sponsor (Director or Elected Official level) reviewed and approved Preliminary Project Plan and Charter?
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.	Has the CIO reviewed and approved the Preliminary Project Plan and Charter
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.	Have stakeholders been identified?
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.	Has a Stakeholder Communication Plan been developed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.	Have requirements been gathered with the input of the stakeholders?
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.	Have you acquired cost estimates for your potential project?

B. Check list for CIP Projects (Include all items in Item A as well.) (Requestor Responsibilities)

Notes for Capital Improvement Projects

- Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) are scheduled out for at least 5 years. Because of this it is very important to plan well in advance of a potential crisis. Expect to be put into the queue for year 3 or more for your initial request. Only in extreme circumstances will a new project be placed earlier than year 3.
- Even if the Steering Committee has reviewed and put your project on the calendar, each project should be requested and presented each year with updates to project plans provided.
- Requests in year 2 and above should provide minimal documentation for the committee with the ability to complete the IT project evaluation form
- Even if the Project Review Committee has previously placed your project in an upcoming year, it may be bumped for a number of reasons including:
 - CIO and / or Committee deems that not enough preparation has occurred
 - Another project is deemed to have a higher priority
 - Circumstances changed to make your project obsolete.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1.	Have you provided the CIO a summary of the project, estimated cost and requested year at any time during the year. The CIO and your BRM will attempt to provide the resources necessary to develop a successful project.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.	With the approval of the CIO, submit a CIP request to Finance. If the CIO does not think your project is ready but you do, you may appeal to the IT Steering Committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.	By using the most up-to-date version of the IT Project evaluation spread sheet as a template, develop a presentation describing your project. This document should be used as a base for documentation presented to the Project Review Subcommittee.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.	Requests in year 2 and above should provide enough information to the committee so they can complete the IT project evaluation form
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.	Requests for year 1 should have all documentation appropriate to the size and scope of the project. Documents could include:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preliminary Project Authorization
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Statement of Work
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Case
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feasibility Study
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stakeholder Management Strategy
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Charter

C. Acquisition check list for IT Steering Committee Approved CIP Projects or O&M Items requiring Commission Approval (Include all items in Item A. and Item B. if CIP Project) (Requestor Responsibilities)

<input type="checkbox"/>	1.	Develop RFP from requirements and evaluation process
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.	Has CIO reviewed and approved your RFP?
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.	Receive approval from the ITSC of your plan to put out an RFP and give background of the project.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.	Submit RFP to Purchasing
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.	Has a committee of stakeholders evaluated the RFP and Documented Costs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.	Has the Project Sponsor and CIO reviewed evaluation results
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.	Has a contract been negotiated with stakeholders, sponsor and CIO input?
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.	Has CIO provided you with a CIO Project Summary?
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.	Has contract and project plan been submitted to ITSC for approval?
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.	Do you have the ITSC approval sheet?
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.	Have you submitted to Commission?

D. Post project check list for IT Steering Committee Approved CIP Projects (All items in Items A., B and C.) (Requestor Responsibilities)

<input type="checkbox"/>	1.	Have you reported to the ITSC the status of your project for this quarter? (Should occur at each ITSC meeting until project is complete.)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Status of project based on milestones
		<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage Complete
		<input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures to date
		<input type="checkbox"/> Noted any issues
	2.	After Project is complete have you presented to the ITSC:
		<input type="checkbox"/> Project Closure Checklist
		<input type="checkbox"/> Post Project Review Report
		<input type="checkbox"/> Lessons Learned
		<input type="checkbox"/> Project Close Authorization
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.	One year after completion report back to the ITSC regarding the project's success in fulfilling the original goals of the project
		<input type="checkbox"/> Provide Post-Implementation Review (PIR) Report to ITSC

IT Steering Committee: Final Recommendation Checklist – CIP / O & M

Project Name: _____

Concept Review by the IT Steering Committee
Comments:

Date: _____

*Reviewed by the Project Review Committee and project recommended
For CIP funding*

Recommended by CIO
Comments:

Date: _____

Confirmed Budget Availability

Date: _____

Recommended by IT Steering Committee
Meets the following requirements (check all that apply):

Date: _____

- Submission of conceptually complete, reasonable and viable projects: minimize project requests that may be beneficial to County business conceptually, however lack substantive information in critical project areas such as costs, objectives, staffing plans, technical architecture, project deliverables and benefits
- Ensure that proposed project timeframes, areas of responsibility and funding accurately reflect the scope of the project
- Leverages prior investments and minimizes duplication of systems, infrastructure and information unless county security is deemed at risk
- Ensures project solutions are coordinated across departments and Elected Officials and are inclusive of all areas of County Government impacted by the project.
- Utilizes the opinions of technical staff, ensures the technology and IT infrastructure are current, supportable and consistent with the defined strategic IT infrastructure

Meets the following priorities (check all that apply):

- Mandated requirements
- Enhance security
- Improve internal controls, operational standards and organization accountability
- Reduce costs and/or enhance revenue, when applicable
- Improve service quality and efficiency
- Ensure a current and supportable application and technology infrastructure

Comments:

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____