Elgin, Illinois

New Issue Report

Ratings

Long Term Issuer Default Rating	AAA

New Issue

$9,310,000 General Obligation Corporate Purpose Bonds, Series 2019	AAA

Outstanding Debt

Elgin General Obligation Corporation Purpose Bonds	AAA
Elgin General Obligation Refunding Bonds	AAA
Elgin Taxable General Obligation Refunding Bonds	AAA
Illinois Finance Authority (City of Elgin Project) Local Government Program Revenue Bonds	AAA

Rating Outlook

Stable

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New Issue Summary

Sale Date: March 13, 2019

Series: Series 2019

Purpose: To finance water and sewer utility projects

Security: The bonds are payable from the GO unlimited tax pledge of Elgin (the city).

Analytical Conclusion

The city operates with strong revenue and expenditure frameworks and a moderate long-term liability burden. Fitch expects that the city will maintain a very high gap-closing ability throughout an economic cycle.

Economic Resource Base: Elgin has a population of about 112,000 and benefits from its location 40 miles northwest of downtown Chicago. The city enjoys a relatively broad employment base that includes healthcare, professional services and retail sectors. Unemployment trends slightly above state and national averages.

Key Rating Drivers

Revenue Framework: 'aaa'
Fitch expects the city's revenue to increase above the rate of inflation and GDP, and the city has unlimited independent legal ability to raise revenue.

Expenditure Framework: 'aa'
Expenditures are expected to increase at a rate in line with revenue growth, and the city has solid flexibility to adjust its main expenditure items.

Long-Term Liability Burden: 'aa'
The city's long-term liability burden is moderate in relation to its resource base.

Operating Performance: 'aaa'
The city has a very high level of gap-closing capacity, and Fitch expects it to manage through an economic cycle while retaining substantial financial flexibility. The city has maintained superior financial resilience through the recent economic recovery while increasing contributions to its two single-employer pension plans.

Rating Sensitivities

Efficient Financial Management: The 'AAA' rating is sensitive to the maintenance of financial flexibility while navigating periods of economic downturn.

Rating History (IDR)

Rating	Action	Outlook/ Watch	Date
AAA	Affirmed	Stable	2/22/19
AAA	Affirmed	Stable	10/08/10
AAA	Revised	Negative	4/30/10
AA+	Affirmed	Negative	4/13/10
AA+	Assigned	Stable	3/27/07

Credit Profile

Approximately 80% of the city's assessed value (AV) is in Kane County and the remaining 20% is in Cook County. While AV did decline by 25% from 2010 through 2014, it increased by a cumulative 20% from 2014 through the 2018 tax year. Preliminary 2019 tax year AV figures from Kane County show another increase of over 5%, while the Cook County preliminary figures are not yet available.

Revenue Framework

The city's revenue framework is very strong, with rapid revenue growth over the last 10 years and an unlimited legal ability to increase revenue through the city's home rule status. More than 35% of fiscal 2017 general fund revenues came from the city's property tax, approximately 22% from sales tax, and around 10% from the city's share of the state income tax. Around nine percent of general fund revenue came from gaming and casino taxes collected in the Elgin riverboat fund, which is included in the general fund for reporting purposes.

Fitch expects revenue growth to continue to exceed the rate of GDP growth, driven by strong growth in AV and sales tax growth. While revenue in the Elgin riverboat fund has declined significantly since its 2005 peak ($28 million to around $11 million in FY 2017), the riverboat fund was not included in the general fund until 2011 and is treated by management purely as a capital projects fund. However, revenue in that fund can be used for general operations.

The city is a home rule municipality and is not subject to the state's Limitation Law. The city has used this flexibility to implement new local option revenue sources, including increases in the past year to the home rule sales tax and the hotel/motel tax, a change in ambulance billing that will lead to an increase in revenue, and the implementation of a new local motor fuel tax. The city maintains unlimited legal flexibility to adjust tax rates and fees as necessary.

Expenditure Framework

The majority of the city's general fund expenditures are for public safety, which accounted for around 63% of FY 2017 general fund spending. Highways and streets expenditures were approximately 11%.

Fitch expects that expenditures will increase in line with revenue growth. The main drivers of the city's expenditure increases come from mandated cost of living adjustments in union contracts (generally close to CPI) and funding for the police and fire pension funds.

The city has solid flexibility over its main expenditure items. Carrying costs including debt service and pension costs are moderate at around 16% of fiscal 2017 governmental expenditures. The city may see increasing actuarially determined contributions to its police and fire pension funds as the city looks to achieve 100% funding by 2040 and begins to use annually updated mortality tables in the actuarial assumptions.

In fiscal 2017, the city spent $12.4 million on capital projects out of the general fund using revenue from the Elgin riverboat fund. The city had planned to spend the rest of its riverboat fund reserves on capital projects in 2018, but delayed work on several street projects that will be spent in 2019 and 2020. The city plans to carry over $6 million in reserves for capital projects into 2020. Going forward, the city expects to have approximately $10 million annually from riverboat revenue for capital expenditures on street improvements. Fitch's supplemental pension metric, which assumes a 20-year level payoff of the Fitch-adjusted liability, indicates that contributions are likely to continue to rise. For more information see "Revised Pension Risk Measurements (Enhancing Pension Analysis in U.S. Public Finance Tax-Supported Rating Criteria)," dated May 31, 2017.

Related Research

Fitch Rates Elgin, IL's $9.3MM ULTGO Bonds 'AAA'; Outlook Stable (February 2019)

Related Criteria

U.S. Public Finance Tax-Supported Rating Criteria (April 2018)

Long-Term Liability Burden

The city's long-term liability burden is moderate, with net pension liabilities and overall debt at approximately 13% of city personal income. The overall debt and the Fitch adjusted net pension liability each comprise 50% of the total liability. Management reports that it does not have current plans to issue new tax supported debt. With revenue from the riverboat fund covering most street improvement projects, the city's 5-year capital improvement plan forecasts issuing around $10 million per year in new tax supported debt to support utility projects that are expected to be paid by utility fees.

The city participates in four defined benefit pension plans: the agent multiple-employer Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF); the agent multiple-employer Sheriff's Law Enforcement Personnel Fund (SLEP); the single-employer Police Pension Plan (PPP); and the single-employer Firefighters' Pension Plan (FPP). The IMRF and SLEP are statutorily funded at the actuarially determined contribution amount and the PPP and FPP are funded at an actuarially determined amount that would be sufficient to bring the plans to 100% funded status by 2040. Fitch estimates the aggregate ratio of assets to liabilities at 56%, assuming a 6% discount rate.

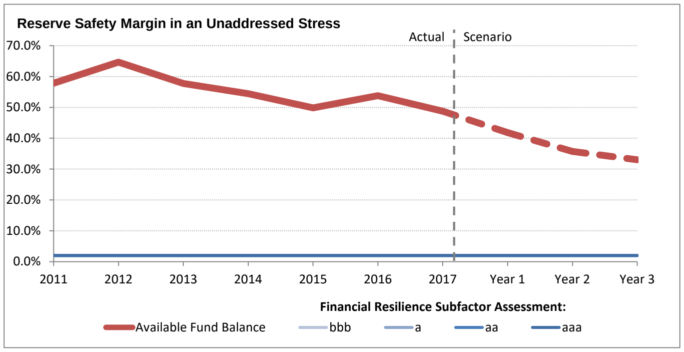
Operating Performance

The city built and maintained high reserve levels through the economic recovery, despite the planned use of general fund balance over the last two fiscal years. For details, see Scenario Analysis, page 4.

The city has demonstrated strong budget management through the recent economic recovery. Management built reserves through fiscal 2012 to a high 65% of general fund expenditures before slowly spending some of those reserves down over the subsequent five fiscal years. The city drew on reserves in fiscal 2017 due to spending on capital projects out of the riverboat fund, but still has reserves at almost 49% of general fund expenditures. Management expects to add approximately $3.6 million in reserves in fiscal 2018 and has conservatively budgeted a very small draw on reserves in 2019.

Elgin (IL)

Scenario Analysis



Analyst Interpretation of Scenario Results:

The city built and maintained high reserve levels through the economic recovery, despite the planned use of general fund balance over the last two fiscal years. The city's low level of revenue volatility and superior inherent budget flexibility, combined with very high levels of reserves, enable the city to maintain financial flexibility well above the 'aaa' reserve safety margin threshold in a typical recessionary decline stress scenario. This stress analysis incorporates reserves in the riverboat fund, which is legally available to be used for operations although the city has a practice of using the fund solely for capital projects.

Scenario Parameters:	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
GDP Assumption (% Change)	(1.0%)	0.5%	2.0%
Expenditure Assumption (% Change)	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Revenue Output (% Change)	(1.0%)	2.7%	5.5%
Inherent Budget Flexibility		Superior	

Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance	Actuals							Scenario Output		
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Total Revenues	103,395	108,567	110,463	110,580	115,124	122,465	118,283	117,100	120,319	126,971
% Change in Revenues	-	5.0%	1.7%	0.1%	4.1%	6.4%	(3.4%)	(1.0%)	2.7%	5.5%
Total Expenditures	94,535	96,423	114,084	113,057	118,374	119,361	122,584	125,036	127,536	130,087
% Change in Expenditures	-	2.0%	18.3%	(0.9%)	4.7%	0.8%	2.7%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Transfers In and Other Sources	11,134	14,222	20,254	12,375	5,607	5,298	5,318	5,265	5,409	5,709
Transfers Out and Other Uses	14,945	14,544	13,177	12,911	8,121	4,681	5,016	5,116	5,218	5,323
Net Transfers	(3,811)	(322)	7,077	(536)	(2,514)	617	302	149	191	386
Bond Proceeds and Other One-Time Uses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Operating Surplus(+)/Deficit(-) After Transfers	5,049	11,822	3,456	(3,013)	(5,764)	3,721	(3,999)	(7,787)	(7,026)	(2,730)
Net Operating Surplus(+)/Deficit(-) (% of Expend. and Transfers Out)	4.6%	10.7%	2.7%	(2.4%)	(4.6%)	3.0%	(3.1%)	(6.0%)	(5.3%)	(2.0%)
Unrestricted/Unreserved Fund Balance (General Fund)	63,312	71,754	73,457	68,569	63,012	66,735	62,238	54,450	47,424	44,694
Other Available Funds (GF + Non-GF)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Combined Available Funds Balance (GF + Other Available Funds)	63,312	71,754	73,457	68,569	63,012	66,735	62,238	54,450	47,424	44,694
Combined Available Fund Bal. (% of Expend. and Transfers Out)	57.8%	64.7%	57.7%	54.4%	49.8%	53.8%	48.8%	41.8%	35.7%	33.0%

Reserve Safety Margins	Inherent Budget Flexibility				
	Minimal	Limited	Midrange	High	Superior
Reserve Safety Margin (aaa)	16.0%	8.0%	5.0%	3.0%	2.0%
Reserve Safety Margin (aa)	12.0%	6.0%	4.0%	2.5%	2.0%
Reserve Safety Margin (a)	8.0%	4.0%	2.5%	2.0%	2.0%
Reserve Safety Margin (bbb)	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

Notes: Scenario analysis represents an unaddressed stress on issuer finances. Fitch's downturn scenario assumes a -1.0% GDP decline in the first year, followed by 0.5% and 2.0% GDP growth in Years 2 and 3, respectively. Expenditures are assumed to grow at a 2.0% rate of inflation. Inherent budget flexibility is the analyst's assessment of the issuer's ability to deal with fiscal stress through tax and spending policy choices, and determines the multiples used to calculate the reserve safety margin. For further details, please see Fitch's US Tax-Supported Rating Criteria.

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