



# **Project Manager Guide To PRB Reviews**

Developed by Office of Information Resource Management  
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## Table of Contents

<i>Overview</i>	<b>3</b>
Purpose	<b>3</b>
Background	<b>3</b>
<i>Project Review Board Process</i>	<b>3</b>
Project Threshold Level Oversight	<b>3</b>
For Projects Coming to PRB - Projects Over Threshold	<b>5</b>
PRB Review Process Description	<b>5</b>
Funding Release Request	<b>6</b>
PRB Project Thresholds - PRB Oversight Rating for IT Projects	<b>7</b>
<i>Project Review Board Deliverable Requirements</i>	<b>8</b>
Project Inception – Appropriations for New Projects: Annual Budget Process and Mid-year IT Project Requests	<b>8</b>
PRB Review Requirements – Planning	<b>8</b>
Preliminary Design, Design, Implementation PRB Review Requirements	<b>10</b>
PRB Review Requirements – Preliminary Design	<b>10</b>
PRB Review Requirements – Design	<b>10</b>
PRB Review Requirements – Implementation	<b>10</b>
Project Close-Out	<b>11</b>
PRB Review Requirements – Value Measurement	<b>12</b>
<i>Project Quality Assurance</i>	<b>13</b>

## Change Log

Version 3.0 – Jan 2016 – Gary Tripp – Remove IT Considerations form.

Version 2.9 – Nov 2014 – Gary Tripp – Modified comments on Resource-Loaded Schedule in Microsoft Project.

Version 2.8/2.7 – June 2014 – Gary Tripp – Updated for new Project Complexity Matrix and Project Management Policy Compliance forms.

Version 2.6 – October 2013 – Gary Tripp – Updated for BAP and other PRB deliverables.

Version 2.5 – August 2011 – Gary Tripp – Updated per new phases.

Version 2.4 – January 2011 – Gary Tripp – Updated per new PRB Process.

Version 2.3 – November 2010 – Gary Tripp – Updated per new PRB Process.

Version 2.2 – April 2010 – Gary Tripp – Updated [PRB Meeting Schedule](#) link.

Version 2.1 – October 2008 – Gary Tripp – Changed monthly report example.

Version 2.0 – June 2008 – Gary Tripp - Added several standard operating procedures and included revised business case template.

## Overview

### *Purpose*

This guide lays out the Project Review Board (PRB) process and the requirements of a project for each PRB review. Project managers are expected to determine the actual phases, sub-phases, and deliverables necessary for project success.

This guide also identifies the requirements of a project for reporting monthly status to enable project monitoring by the Project Review Board.

**This is not a project management methodology, a software development lifecycle methodology, or a training guide for project managers.** For information on the Project Management methodology approved by the PRB for countywide use on IT projects, see [Project Management Methodology, Tools & Templates](#).

### *Background*

The King County Council created the Office of Information Resource Management (OIRM) with a central Project Management Office (PMO) to oversee projects. OIRM and the Chief Information Officer position were established in December, 2000 with the adoption by King County Council Ordinance # 14005. A key role and responsibility of OIRM (now KCIT) is to develop guidelines for the management of information technology projects and to monitor project implementation to assure projects stay on track.

## Project Review Board Process

A Governance Structure was later adopted with a Project Review Board to review projects at phases and release funds for the next phase. Figure 1 is a diagram of the overall PRB process. The project review process begins after budgets have been appropriated by the County Council and continues through project close-out and benefits measurement.

### *Project Threshold Level Oversight*

In October, 2010, the Project Review Board approved establishment of the project threshold level oversight. Projects under the threshold level do not need to come to PRB for funding releases and briefings. This threshold is defined as:

1. Project budget is less than or equal to \$250K, including all capital, grant and operating costs;
2. Project duration is up to one year; and
3. Total cost of ownership over 5 years is up to \$1M.

For projects under threshold, agencies can assume review and approval of funding release requests in accordance with the Agency IT Investment and Oversight Board Charter when the Charter is enacted. An agency will use the [Agency IT Investment and Oversight Board Charter – Template](#) to develop their own charter retaining the sections on *Purpose, Role, and Oversight of project documents for Project Review Board* unchanged, and customizing the sections on *Membership, Leadership, Investment and Oversight Meetings* according to agency needs. In order for the charter to be enacted, the signed agency charter needs to be provided for PRB review and approved by PRB.

## Project Manager Guide to PRB Reviews Typical Elements of Phased PRB Deliverables

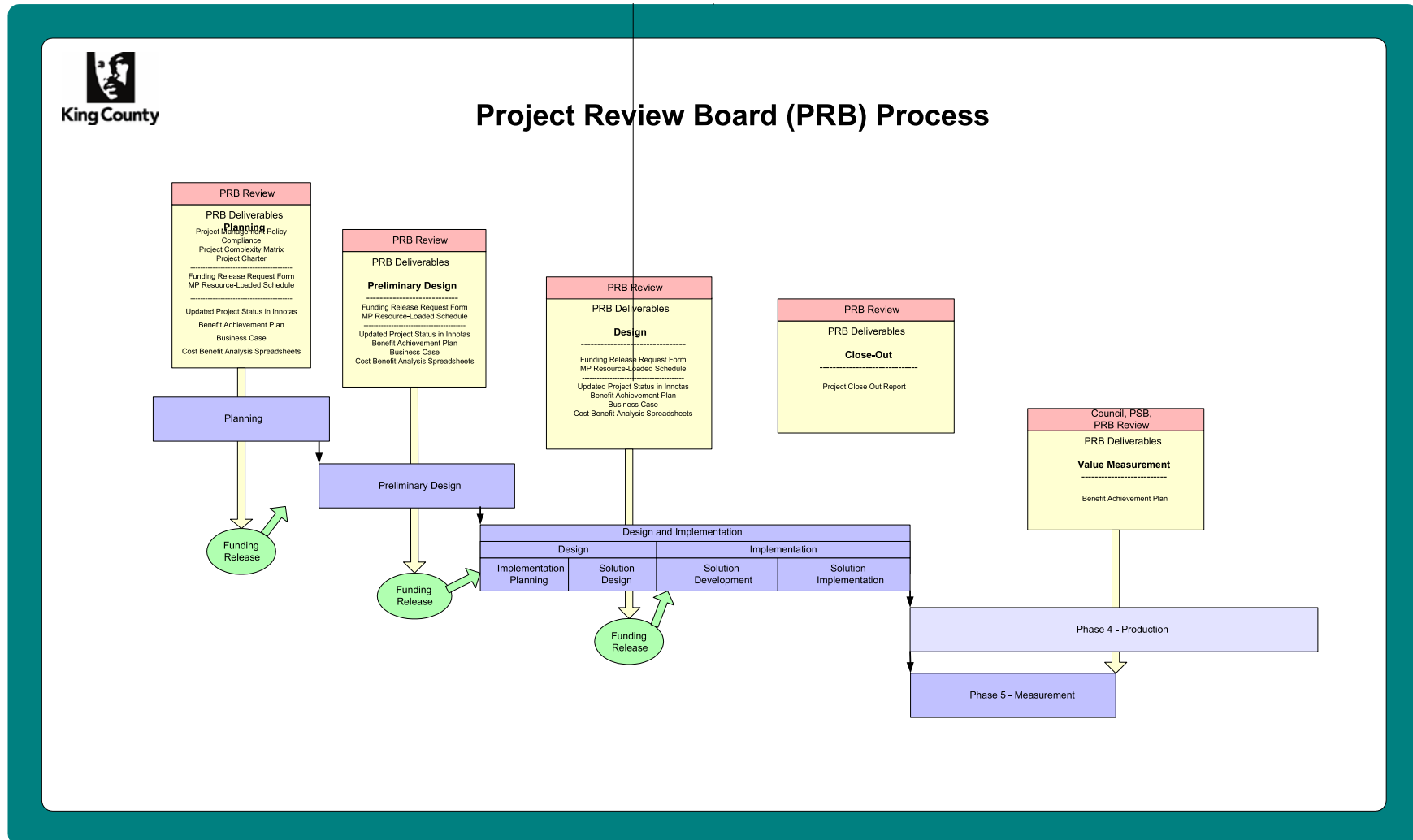


Figure 1 - Project Review Board (PRB) Process

All projects under threshold provide required documents to PRB listed under PRB Threshold Oversight in the [PRB Process Change Chart](#).

Projects over threshold continue to present to the PRB funding releases and have full PRB oversight for funding releases and briefings. All projects over threshold provide required documents to PRB listed under PRB Full Oversight in [the PRB Process Change Chart](#).

## ***For Projects Coming to PRB - Projects Over Threshold***

### ***Triggers for calling for a Project Review Board meeting***

Milestones of the project will generally be used to set the schedule for the Project Review Board meetings, keying off the project's progress for each phase and when the deliverables will be ready for review as well as the project's budget and when the project will need to have the next release of funds approved.

The process for reviewing and providing oversight of information technology projects through the Project Review Board can be triggered by several different events:

- A request by a Business Management Council / Technology Management Board member, or a Project Manager.
- Project milestones including the need for a funding release or a briefing.
- Concerns or issues with PRB monthly monitoring reports.
- A request by PRB members.

### ***Scheduling with the Project Review Board***

Each technology project over threshold, regardless of funding source (including grant and operations funded projects), and project costs, is required to follow the PRB Process for Funding Releases and project monthly status reports. This means that all funds including capital, grant and operating funds need to be requested for release by the PRB.

Contingency release approvals for projects over threshold will be determined by the CIO on behalf of the Project Review Board. If the CIO determines that a project has exceptions to releasing funds for contingency, it will be scheduled for a review by the Project Review Board. Otherwise the CIO will approve on behalf of the PRB and the project is not required to attend a PRB meeting.

The Project Review Board meetings are scheduled on an as-needed basis.

### ***PRB Review Process Description***

A typical IT project is a major one-time effort to plan, develop, and/or implement a data processing, telecommunications, or other technology related operation with the intent to improve the efficiency of the requesting department or to provide new or enhanced services to the public and are required to participate in the five phase PRB Review Process.

The PRB requires project reviews at five standard points in a typical project:

- Project Inception
- Review – Planning**
- Review – Preliminary Design**
- Review – Design**
- Review – Implementation**
- Production (No Review)
- Project Close-out
- Review – Value Measurement**

The exact phases of a project will depend on the nature of the problem the project is addressing, but the project is expected to align its process with the standard PRB reviews.

## ***Funding Release Request***

As technology projects follow the Project Review Board Process of five distinct phases, there are three points where a Release of Funds decision is required (as shown in Figure 1). Each technology project over threshold, regardless of funding source is required to follow the PRB Process for Funding Releases. This means that all funds including capital, grant and operating funds need to be requested for release by the PRB.

The project manager prepares the documents required for the PRB review which are sent electronically to the PRB staff. These documents are reviewed by the PRB staff for completeness and the project summaries distributed to members of the PRB prior to the scheduled PRB review. (The project should go through a departmental or project steering committee review process before submitting to the PRB.)

## Project Manager Guide to PRB Reviews

The following documents are required for Project Requesting Funding Releases from PRB:

Funding Release Request (FFR) Documents	
<i>These three documents are only required for the project's first Funding Release Request.</i>	<a href="#">Project Complexity Matrix</a>
	<a href="#">Project Management Policy Compliance</a>
	<a href="#">Project Charter</a>
<i>Documents from the previous Funding Release Request may be resubmitted if no changes are needed, or updated.</i>	<a href="#">Funding Release Request Form</a>
	Resource-Loaded Schedule in Microsoft Project <input type="checkbox"/>
	<a href="#">Updated Project Status in the Innotas Project Portfolio Management System</a>
	<a href="#">Benefit Achievement Plan</a>
	<a href="#">Business Case and Cost Benefit Analysis Spreadsheets</a>

The Project Review Board will make a decision on whether to release funds for the next phase of the project. In a PRB meeting, the board members present will vote on approval/disapproval or conditional approval. There must be a quorum of two board members to vote.

### ***PRB Project Thresholds - PRB Oversight Rating for IT Projects***

As stated above, a typical project is required to have five standard reviews with the Project Review Board. Occasionally, projects do not need a review as rigorous in nature due to size, budget, and/or project management experience. Therefore, the Project Review Board has developed and approved a method for agencies to complete a [Project Self-Rating Form](#) that identifies what level of oversight (single funding release or phased funding release) is recommended to the PRB. This form is completed by agencies for new and existing IT projects to determine their risk rating. This is reviewed by the board and an oversight level is assigned to the IT project.

The department director is required to sign the self-rating form. The CIO will review the self-rating form to resolve any questions or concerns related to the level of oversight for the project, and make a list of recommendations for the PRB members to approve.

### Project Review Board Deliverable Requirements

#### *Project Inception – Appropriations for New Projects: Annual Budget Process and Mid-year IT Project Requests*

Typically, new projects are requested by King County agencies during the annual budget proposal process, as explained on the web site. [All the information you may need for your IT Project requests.](#)

When projects are requested at times other than during the annual budget, a similar process is followed on a project-by-project basis.

The PRB Process depicted below starts after appropriation authority has been granted through the Executive and King County Council.

#### *PRB Review Requirements – Planning*

High-level initial planning of the project is done during Planning. It is typically conducted with non-project funds before the project team is formed and project activities begin. It may be conducted with project funds if available.

There are nine required deliverables for the Planning PRB Review:

- A. Project Complexity Matrix
- B. Project Management Policy Compliance
- C. Project Charter
- D. Funding Release Request Form
- E. Resource-Loaded Schedule in Microsoft Project
- F. Updated Project Status in the Innotas Project Portfolio Management System
- G. Benefit Achievement Plan
- H. Business Case and Cost Benefit Analysis Spreadsheet

Below, the requirements are identified for each required PRB deliverable.

#### **A. [Project Complexity Matrix](#)**

Description: Assesses the business and technical complexity of the project.

#### **B. [Project Management Policy Compliance](#)**

Description: Describes why the selected project manager is appropriate to manage the project, for a new project and/or for a newly assigned project manager to an existing project.

## **C. [Project Charter](#)**

Description: The purpose of the project charter is to clearly explain the purpose for the project, state the project vision and goals, and formally authorizes the project work to begin. In addition to project purpose and objectives, the charter should also include scope, high-level timeframe, high-level budget, expected benefits, governance structure, resources, roles and responsibilities, key deliverables, and any other relevant information such as assumptions, dependencies, issues/risks, and success measures.

## **D. [Funding Release Request Form](#)**

Description: Provides project background, progress, and funding release amounts requested.

## **E. Resource-Loaded Schedule in Microsoft Project**

Description: Includes milestones and deliverables for the work for which you are requesting funds.

## **F. [Updated Project Status in the Innotas Project Portfolio Management System](#)**

Description: Updated Project Status in the Innotas Project Portfolio Management System.

## **G. [Benefit Achievement Plan](#)**

Description: The purpose of the Benefit Achievement Plan is:

1. To achieve a clear understanding and focus on the benefits of a project prior to its beginning
2. To update projected benefits of the project as it moves through stages of project approval, implementation, and post-project closure
3. To establish accountability for identifying and achieving benefits
4. To ensure that benefits are achieved.

## **H. [Business Case and Cost Benefit Analysis Spreadsheets](#)**

Description: This document describes technology alternatives considered by the project, project approach, Interfaces, Integration, Dependencies, and Security & Privacy impacts. This document presents the business reasons for doing this project and an analysis of the project costs and on-going operations and maintenance expenses to determine if the benefits gained from this investment in technology outweigh the costs over a period of years.

## ***Preliminary Design, Design, Implementation PRB Review Requirements***

There are seven required deliverables for these PRB Reviews:

- A. Funding Release Request Form
- B. Resource-Loaded Schedule in Microsoft Project
- C. Updated Project Status in the Innotas Project Portfolio Management System
- D. Benefit Achievement Plan
- E. Business Case
- F. Cost Benefit Analysis Spreadsheet

### ***PRB Review Requirements – Preliminary Design***

During this phase, business issues and requirements are documented, and alternative solutions are analyzed and selected. Preliminary Design is funded with the funds released by the PRB after the Planning review.

### ***PRB Review Requirements – Design***

Design is typically when the project's implementation is planned in detail and the solution's design is developed. The work for Design is funded with the funds released by the PRB after the Preliminary Design review.

### ***PRB Review Requirements – Implementation***

Implementation is when the solution is developed, tested, and implemented. Plans are developed for operations and maintenance of the production environment, and for how value derived from this project will be measured in the future. Implementation is funded with the funds released by the PRB after the Design PRB Review.

### ***Project Close-Out***

When an information technology project is completed, the project manager notifies the board by noting the project is completed with completion date in Innotas. At this point, no further reporting is required.

The [Project close-out report](#) is submitted to the PRB within one month of the final monthly status report. The PRB will review the report.

The required deliverable for the Project Close-out is:

- ☒ Project Close-out Report

### **Project Close-out Report**

Documentation of the project description, results, variance and a summary explanation of what the project accomplished – highlighting relevant project scope, schedule, and budget information from the close-out documentation. Also includes benefits measurements, lessons learned, records retention, and deliverables turnover.

### ***PRB Review Requirements – Value Measurement***

This Review is when the value received from implementing the project's product or service is evaluated and compared to the value projected in the business case. The Project Review Board will conduct this review with measurements identified and reported by the project manager or agency representative.

The required deliverables for this review are:

#### **A. Benefit Achievement Plan**

- This plan identifies the value received after (or within) one year of operation and compares it to the value projected by the Business Case.
  - Did the project provide quantifiable value to the county or to the public?
  - Did the project provide non-quantifiable benefits to the county or to the public?
  - Did the project provide benefits comparable to those projected by the Business Case?

### Project Quality Assurance

The Project Review Board decided, in its February 19, 2003 meeting, that it would “direct Quality Assurance Reviews and Project Audits on information technology projects on an as-needed basis. Funding for this activity will come from project contingency budgets.” IT Project Quality Management is composed of 1) Project Oversight and 2) Quality Assurance. The Project Oversight assesses project management practices and the Quality Assurance assesses the quality of deliverables and quality specifics of the current project phase.

#### Triggers for PRB to Initiate a QA Review

- The project has self-rated itself yellow, and is having trouble developing a suitable corrective action plan.
- The project has self-rated itself red.
- The project exhibits one or more of the following project warning signs:
  - Lack of evidence of good project management
  - Critical milestone is missed, or is going to be missed
  - Budget is being spent faster than projected
  - Project scope is changing
  - High priority, critical issues are not being resolved
  - Project has no risks identified

Additionally, through a competitive bid process, KCIT has created a pool of external consultants with proven track records in the public and private sectors and has entered into master contracts with these consultants for the purpose of assisting projects toward a successful completion. King County agencies may use these experts without going through a separate competitive procurement process, saving considerable time and money. All costs for external consultants are paid by the requesting agency.

Further information on Project Quality Assurance can be found on the [Quality Assurance/Oversight](#) page.