Runway Reserves

HOA Reserve Budget Blind-Spot Checklist

Use one copy per project. An unchecked box is a question to raise with your board, manager or provider. It is not a finding that something is wrong.

Project _____ Figure in the plan _____ Year due _____

1. The work under the visible surface

Some damage stays hidden until the old material comes off.

- ☐ We have read what the figure leaves out, such as decking, framing or other hidden repairs.
- ☐ The bid gives a unit price for hidden repairs, and states how much of that work it includes.
- ☐ We know how extra work gets approved once the project has started.
- ☐ The budget has room for hidden repairs, or the board has accepted the risk in its minutes.

2. The cost of getting the work done

Materials and labor are only part of a project.

- ☐ Removal and disposal of the old material are in the figure.
- ☐ Access is in the figure: scaffolding, lifts, staging or traffic control.
- ☐ Permits and outside design help are in the figure.
- ☐ The figure fits this site, not only a price from another property.

3. Shared systems that are hard to see

Buried lines are hard to date and hard to price, so a study may properly leave them out.

- ☐ We have a list of the shared water, sewer, drainage and electrical systems.
- ☐ We know which ones the association owns and which belong to a utility or to owners.
- ☐ We know which ones the study leaves out, and why.
- ☐ The board has decided how it would pay for a failure, such as a repair allowance.

4. Several projects arriving together

A healthy balance can drop quickly when large projects land close together.

- ☐ We have looked at spending year by year, not only the total.
- ☐ We have marked the years with the most spending and the lowest balance.
- ☐ We have asked whether any project could safely move, and what moving it would cost.
- ☐ We have checked the plan with a project running 20% over budget.

5. An inspection is not the repair

Paying for an inspection pays for the report, not for the work it recommends.

- ☐ We have collected every inspection report with open items.
- ☐ Each open item has an estimated cost and a target date.
- ☐ Each open item sits in the reserve plan, the operating budget or a list of decisions still needed.
- ☐ Someone has sent the reports to our reserve study provider.

Questions to ask

Reserve study provider: What does this figure leave out? What would change your estimate most? Which year concerns you most?

Contractor: What is excluded from this bid? What are your unit prices for hidden work? What could change the price after work starts?

Open items

Item	Estimated cost	Target year	Who follows up

Notes

General information, not legal, financial or building advice, and not a reserve study. Rules differ by state and by governing documents. Ask a qualified professional about the condition or safety of any building or system.

Guide and what-if cost tool: runwayreserves.com/blog/hoa-reserve-budget-blind-spots/