A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool used to assist the governing body of a municipality in planning and managing anticipated growth and development of that municipality’s services and facilities.

A CIP helps the municipality anticipate needs and, therefore, plan for upgrades rather than reacting to immediate issues that may arise. This type of long-term planning allows resources to be secured over a longer period of time, and the need to be clearly communicated to the governing body well ahead of time. Without a CIP the municipality is forced to support and fund all at once, which often results in spikes in the tax rate and as a result may not receive the votes needed to move forward.

A CIP that is prepared with input from all decision makers and department heads makes everyone aware of the town’s planning efforts. This can streamline project financing, reduce duplicating efforts and increase “buy-in” throughout town management that will ultimately help lead public communication and engagement efforts. Additionally, communities that adopt a CIP are well-positioned to participate in federal or state grant programs and are better prepared to act on the funds should they be awarded.

Regular attention to a CIP also increases the longevity of community assets by supporting regular maintenance – in the long-term, it’s more efficient to maintain a building rather than deferring maintenance and waiting for safety hazards and eventual building replacement. Additionally, investment in needed infrastructure identified in a CIP can help promote economic development and other needs identified in the Master Plan.

RSA 764:5 The sole purpose and effect of the capital improvements program shall be to aid in the mayor or selectmen and the budget committee in their consideration of the annual budget.

RSA 674:7 once a CIP is authorized, every municipal department is expected to provide “a statement of all capital projects it proposes to undertake during the term of the program.” The materials submitted by the departments shall “classify projects according to the urgency and need for the realization and shall recommend a time sequence for their implementation.”

RSA 674:8 to be submitted to the selectmen for consideration as part of the annal budget.

The CIP committee meets approximately 5 times a year. These meetings take place in the Town Hall and include department heads.