

City of Providence

Capital Improvement Plan
Fiscal Years 2018-2022



Jorge Elorza, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

City Plan Commission

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Introduction

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a five-year program of planned improvements to Providence's public infrastructure. The purpose of the CIP is to facilitate and coordinate future capital improvements within the City's current and future financial framework.

The Capital Improvement Budget, adopted in coordination with the City's operating budget, funds the projects listed in the first year of the CIP.

Section 812 of the City Charter requires that the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), in conjunction with the Mayor's Office, prepare the five-year CIP and Capital Improvement Budget, and that the City Plan Commission (CPC) review the proposed CIP and budget and approve them for submission to the City Council.

Capital Improvements

A capital improvement is a large expenditure that adds to the worth or capacity of a community's capital assets. Capital improvements are usually paid for through the issuance of municipal bonds, with the bonds' principal and interest payments made annually through the City's operating budget. Funding for improvements to school buildings is not addressed in the CIP. The City will submit a supplemental Capital Improvement Program for school facilities.

Funding for Capital Improvements

Funding sources for these projects may include traditional bond issuance, CDBG, general fund allocations, various environmental resources (i.e. Canada Dam restoration) or other outside resources. Capital improvements are often funded through the issuance of municipal bonds. Beginning in fiscal year 2019, the City of Providence will begin to see significant debt service payments fall off the books. If the City's goal is to maintain a consistent level of annual debt service expense, the payoff of old debt will result in additional opportunities to borrow. This plan serves as an outline of anticipated projects recognizing that additional projects may be added to the plan as the CIP is approved annually. Funding eligibility outside of traditional bond money may be determined as projects arise.

The CIP Process

The annual CIP process begins when the DPD, in coordination with the Mayor's office, solicits budget submissions from the departments of Public Works, Public Property, and Parks and Recreation. A feasible level of borrowing is then determined, projects are prioritized based on need, the draft CIP is provided to City Council leadership, and the CIP is presented to the City Plan Commission for review and approval. The approved CIP is then forwarded to the Mayor's office for submission as part of the budget.

Consistency with *Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan*

Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan is the city's long-term planning document. It lays out the general policies of the City with respect to land use and the built environment, housing, economic development, sustainability and the environment, historic preservation, community services, recreation, and transportation. The CIP is an implementation element of the Comprehensive Plan. As such, the proposed capital improvements must be consistent with the goals set forth in that document.

Description of the CIP: Fiscal Years 2018-2022

This CIP is broken down into three categories, administered by the respective departments: Public Works, which includes streets, sidewalks, complete streets, bridges, dams, sewers, and stormwater; Parks and Recreation, which includes playgrounds, trails, and related equipment and amenities; and Public Property, which includes recreation centers and facilities and fire and police facilities. The tables in Appendix A show proposed spending for each of the categories for fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

Department of Public Works

The requests for fiscal years 2018-22 include roadway repair, maintenance, and reconstruction; bridge and dam repair; complete streets work including curb extensions, striping, traffic calming, and bicycle and pedestrian amenities; and sewer and stormwater management system maintenance, repair, and construction, including the installation of green infrastructure.

Road and sidewalk project allocations will be determined by the Department of Public Works (DPW) in accordance with its Pavement Management Program (PMP), which prioritizes roadways based on condition and related factors. The City's \$40 million road repair bond, approved in 2012, identified approximately 60 miles of roadways to repair with bond proceeds, leaving some 180 miles of unrepaired roads at an estimated cost of \$120 million.

To prepare the PMP, the City's consultant, VHB, performed a detailed inspection of the condition of the pavement on all City-maintained roads, and created a database of this information which can be viewed, edited and analyzed using computer software. DPW uses the software to model when to perform which repairs on a road network. The PMP helps the City to extend the lifespan of a road through preventive maintenance, such as crack sealing, and to identify what degree of repair or replacement is needed. As roads are repaired or reconstructed, the software is updated accordingly. The PMP proposed a 10-year commitment of \$10 million per year to bring streets to an acceptable condition citywide.

A 2014 DPW report determined that repair and replacement of the city's sidewalks was vastly underfunded, and since that time the backlog of sidewalk requests has grown considerably despite the work undertaken through CDBG funding. Along with complete streets work, which provides bicycle and pedestrian amenities and traffic calming, sidewalk repair and reconstruction should be dictated by road paving priorities defined by the PMP.

DPW is responsible for some 400 miles of sewers, along with 12,000 catch basins, 4,000 inlet grates, and 20,000 manholes. Because of the age and complexity of the system, many maintenance and repair issues need to be addressed. The City maintains three types of sewers: storm sewers, which transport stormwater from streets to ponds, rivers and the bay; sanitary sewers, which handle liquid waste from buildings; and combined sewers, which handle both sanitary and storm flows. It is estimated that the City's sewer system would cost some \$50 million to bring up to an acceptable standard.

The City's stormwater system is permitted by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) under federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority. Due to a Notice of Violation for system non-compliance, the City is subject to a Consent Agreement with RIDEM; two of the identified stormwater management improvements in the CIP are mandated by the consent agreement.

City-owned dams are also subject to RIDEM regulation under federal EPA authority. Due to a Notice of Violation for the unsafe condition of Canada Pond Dam, the City is required to identify funding for repair, removal, or partial removal of the Dam. This funding is included in the CIP budget. Two bridges will also need repair within the five-year CIP budget period and are included.

Department of Public Property

The Department of Public Property (DPP) is responsible for the repair and maintenance of 35 City buildings, including City Hall, the Public Safety Complex, fire stations, recreation centers, vehicle repair garages, public works facilities, an animal shelter, and the police horse barn. DPP requests for 2018-22 includes upgrades and repairs to City Hall, fire department upgrades and repairs, recreation center repairs and fire alarm upgrades, police training alarm upgrades, and playing field improvements. Many of the identified improvements and upgrades identified in the CIP are to ensure fire code compliance, to repair roofs, windows, mechanicals and plumbing, and to meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) code compliance. The DPP has evaluated each property and has prioritized the proposed improvements based on urgency and availability of funding. Listed in FY 2020 and FY 2021 is the most significant projected Public Property expense: a new facility for the Department of Public Works.

Parks Department

The Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) currently maintains 113 parks, including athletic fields, playgrounds, conservation areas, tracks and trails, basketball courts, dog parks, cemeteries, an ice rink, and Roger Williams Park. Improvements to Roger Williams Park alone were estimated at \$8,000,000 in 2014, and a \$3,000,000 bond was approved toward that goal. Upgrades to athletic fields totaling \$750,000 citywide were estimated in a 2015 evaluation. Other significant expenses identified by department evaluations include \$12.5 million in upgrades to bring all parks up to safety standards.