

MEMORANDUM

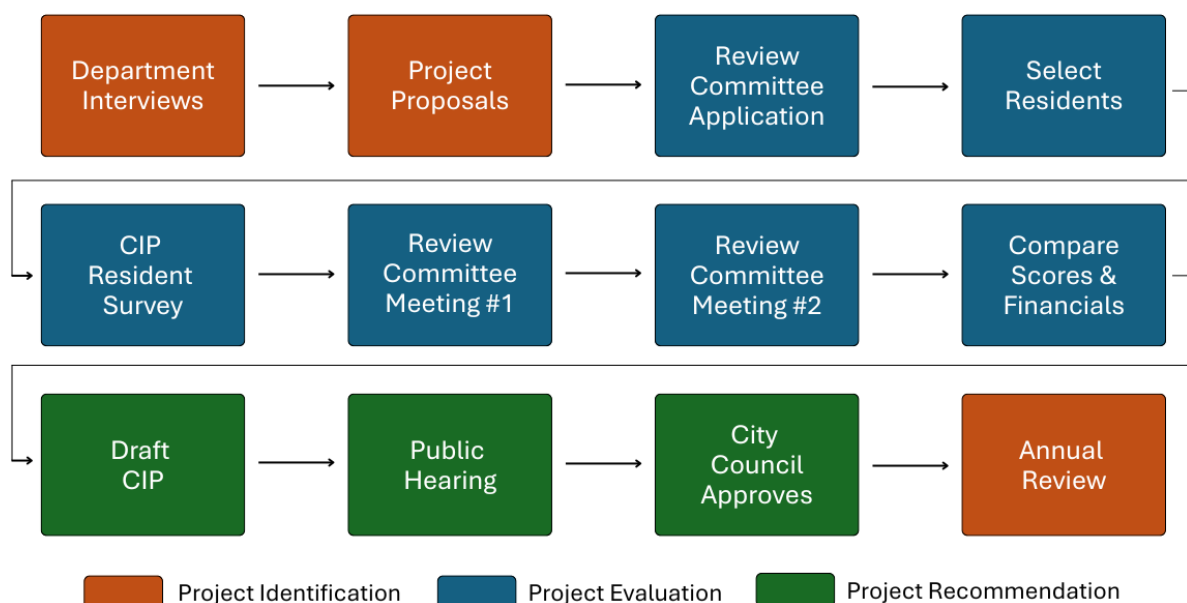
Date: 5.12.2026
To: City of West Branch Officials
From: MPA Capstone Team
Cc: Travis Kraus & Phuong Nguyen
Re: West Branch Capital Improvement Plan FY 2028 - 2032

Executive Summary

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) serves as a key planning tool to help the City of West Branch identify capital priorities, evaluate funding options, and align public investments with community goals and operational capacity. A capital improvement project can include construction, upgrades to public buildings, streets, parks, equipment purchases, utility system improvements, and similar investments. This five-year CIP covers fiscal years (FY) 2028 to 2032, which is July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2032. This project involved developing a new participatory capital improvement planning process, which included project proposals from department heads, a resident CIP Review Committee, structured evaluation criteria, and resident survey. The heads of West Branch’s six departments cumulatively proposed 21 potential capital improvement projects. Based on CIP Review Committee scoring, resident feedback, and financial feasibility, 11 projects ranging from public infrastructure to recreational amenities are recommended for inclusion in the FY 2028 – 2032 CIP.

Methodology

The CIP planning process included 12 steps to identify, evaluate, and recommend projects, as detailed in the figure below.



This methodology was created based on best practices from several cities throughout Iowa and the nation. These methods were then adopted to meet West Branch's needs. Specifically, the CIP Review Committee, which consisted of West Branch's Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, a representative from the Planning and Zoning Commission, and three residents, was developed to enhance community engagement and transparency in the planning process. While more than 20 residents applied to join the CIP Review Committee, three were selected based on the professional and personal perspectives they would bring while prioritizing representation across age, gender, and geography of where residents lived. The CIP Review Committee scored the proposed projects based on nine evaluation criteria: alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, regulatory compliance, resident impact, operational budget impact, external funding, public, health and safety, project timing, project feasibility, and reviewer's discretion. The categories totaled 100 possible points. West Branch residents were also invited to complete a survey about their support or opposition for the 21 proposed projects. More than 100 residents completed this survey.

Recommendations

When determining the recommended projects and phasing for West Branch's CIP, the CIP Review Committee scores, resident feedback, and financial feasibility were all considered. Projects which earned an average score greater than 60 points from the CIP Review Committee were given top priority. This narrowed down the 21 project proposals to 13 potential projects. Of these 13 projects, the splash pad and Main Street water main were ultimately not included in the FY 2028 – 2032 CIP because both projects are later phases of larger projects: a community center and the Main Street Super Project. This left 11 projects for inclusion in the CIP. These 11 projects were phased throughout the five years with consideration for ensuring responsible debt management, timing of multi-phased projects, and balancing critical infrastructure with recreational amenities. The recommended projects and phasing as well as the respective committee score and resident feedback from the survey are detailed in the table below.

Fiscal Year	Project Name	Estimated Cost	Committee Score	Resident Support
2028	Water Plant	\$3,000,000	82	99%
	Herbert Hoover Highway Trail	\$300,000	74	85%
2029-2030	Truck Re-Route	\$550,000-\$1,000,000	62	71%
	Thomas Drive Sewer	\$1,370,000	81	83%
	Greenview Water Main	\$360,000	75	87%
	North Downey Water Main	\$250,000	62	86%
2031	Beranek Park	\$300,000-\$350,000	81	72%
	Rail Trail	\$90,000	70	78%
	Sewer Televising	\$110,000	76	86%
2032	Main Street Phase 1	\$2,500,000	77	85%
	Town Hall	\$50,000	64	67%

A variety of financing sources would fund these projects. A loan from Iowa's State Revolving Fund would be used for the water plant while two General Obligation bonds would fund the truck re-route, Thomas Drive sewer, Greenview water main, North Downey water main, and the first phase of Main Street. Local Options Sales Tax or Capital Improvement Levy reserves can be used for both trails as well as Beranek Park. Several projects would also be eligible for state and federal grants. Lastly, West Branch can fund the sewer televising and part of the Town Hall renovation through internal City funds.

The FY 2028 – 2032 CIP does not include all 21 proposed projects due to fiscal and operational constraints, low committee scores, or lack of resident support. The following projects have not been prioritized in this plan: splash pad, ladder truck, new police/fire station, community center, 300 Street renovation, new library, pedestrian bridge, South Baker/Downey overlay, and expanded cemetery plots. However, the City should consider these projects for future CIPs, especially to ensure public safety and expand recreational amenities. Many of these projects are also important to consider to support the City's future growth.

Conclusion

The CIP is a living document that serves as a financial management tool and a blueprint for infrastructure development that will meet the community's current needs while also positioning the City for future prosperity. However, the CIP is not a legal obligation for the City Council or City staff to complete all proposed projects within the recommended time frame. To comply with Iowa code 384.15, the City must hold a public hearing before the City Council can adopt the FY 2028 – 2032 CIP.¹ West Branch's City Administrator should review the CIP annually with the City Council to assess the overall progress of the recommended projects. The City should also compare estimated and final costs as well as projected and completed project timelines. The City may alter the phasing or prioritize new projects throughout the five years based on urgent needs or new financing opportunities. The City can continue to utilize the 12-step planning process for future CIPs. In keeping with a five-year cycle, the City would begin planning in July 2031 for its FY 2033 – 2037 CIP.

¹ Iowa Legislature. (2026). *Iowa Code, Chapter 384: City finance*. <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ico/chapter/384.pdf>