



**RIVER FALLS CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP REGARDING
THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-2026**

July 13, 2021, 5 p.m.

Training Room, City Hall

City Council Members Present: Mayor Dan Toland, Todd Bjerstedt, Nick Carow, Sean Downing, Scott Morrisette, Alyssa Mueller, Diane Odeen, Ben Plunkett

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; Assistant City Administrator Jason Stroud; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Community Development Director Amy Peterson; City Clerk Amy White; Police Chief Gordon Young; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; Public Works Director Mike Stifter; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh; Senior Accountant Sam Hosszu; Economic Development Manager Keri Schreiner

Others: Ben Fochs

The workshop began at 5:03 p.m.

City Administrator Simpson provided an introduction. He expects the City's CIP Plan not to be as dramatic as other cities. He appreciates having been involved in the process but at an executive level. He thanked Sarah and Jason and the other staff that are spearheading the effort.

Assistant City Administrator Stroud said staff would like to obtain any Council feedback for the CIP. He will go over specifics of the financial overview. The formal CIP will come to Council at end of August.

Finance Director Karlsson said the City uses the strategic plan as a basis for all other plans including the Administration's Major Work Plan, the Fiscal Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, TID Plans, Business Plans, and the Budget Plan.

The City's Budget themes include future financial sustainability, long-term strategic growth, continued investment in infrastructure.

Revenues vary by fund:

- General Fund are state aids, property taxes, charges for services
- Electric, water, sewer are charges for services
- Debt service funds are property tax/tax increment
- Capital project funds are grants, tax levy, donations, special assessments, community resources, impact fees, utility funds, IT fund, fund reserves

Karlsson showed a slide illustrating the Fiscal Targets versus the 2021-2022 budget. A breakdown of the targets is:

- 60% general fund
- 20 % for debt service

- 10 % library
- 10% capital projects

Overall, the City is following close to the targets. The Capital Improvement Plan are capital items that have a value of \$5,000 or more. It is typically done every two years. Last year, the plan was for one year due to Covid.

Stroud said it is a \$53 Million CIP plan. There's \$2.5 million for vehicles. Economic development and infrastructure initiatives are foundation of funding. A majority of funding comes from borrowing, TIDs or various utility funds.

Karlsson said TID borrowing is supported by the TIDs.

2022-2026 Project Highlights

Stroud said this plan has not included any stimulus funds. Mann Valley infrastructure is \$16.5 million. The Wasson Lane reconstruction is \$3.9 million. The North Interceptor Sewer is \$2.3 million. The biosolids facility is \$6.4 million which needs to be included due to timing. We will need to commit to long-term contract with the facility or build our own system. Building our own facility does require a larger capital investment. The issue will be further analyzed. We need to plan for this expense. Hopefully, there is federal funding to offset the cost. The \$6.4 million is considered as the high end. The North Zone Water Tower is \$2.5 million and will provide service to Sterling Ponds and will loop west. Stroud provided details about project. The FERC hydro relicensing and lower dam removal will be \$1.5 million.

Other projects include electric distribution improvements of \$1 million, Powell Avenue Bridge deck replacement of \$900,000, and Glen Park Creativity Play Area for \$350,000 of which \$300,000 would rely on donations.

Vehicle Highlights

Included is \$2,542,000 investment in replacement vehicles. Stroud scored each vehicle by a metric. He explained his process to determine what was on the list. Not everything staff wanted is included - quite a few items were left off.

Projects Not Included in Current CIP

City Administrator Simpson covered items not included in the current CIP Plan.

- Glen Park master plan improvements including pool replacement
- Fire station design and construction
- Downtown alley upgrades
- Hoffman Park master plan improvements
- Additional dog parks
- Replacement fire department brush truck
- Major downtown improvements

Simpson said the City does not have enough staff to do all of these projects. He is speaking about it because he has had discussions with councilors in one on ones or other instances. A word of caution - we are not providing Council a lot of flexibility as we usually do.

Simpson doesn't want Council to think that they can just add projects. Not all projects have detailed impacts. Biosolids has had more analysis. We think we do a good job of providing data to work with. Saying yes to something may result in needing more staff later.

Another item is more aggressive sidewalk and trail inspection. There are a lot of sidewalks/trails in the CIP primarily in Economic Development. Trail enhancement along Paulson is part of the water project. We are making progress on trails and sidewalks and almost all are related to new development. Wasson Lane has a whole lot of sidewalks.

Aldersperson Mueller asked about a connection from Sterling Ponds to the downtown. Simpson said yes there is. He talked about the sidewalks. We are making progress but not filling all the gaps.

Alderson Downing asked about implementing a sidewalk impact fee. Simpson said that would be done at your request. He is not sure it has been done in Wisconsin. Simpson provided more details. He talked about connecting new to older parts of town. Downing asked about including it in the comp plan. Scot said yes.

Alderson Plunkett asked about a future focus on new development and infrastructure or projects that are not currently included like pool replacement and more sidewalks.

Simpson said we are focused on new development and refreshing of areas. If Council wants to be more aggressive and do development, we will have to get on the bandwagon of needing more staff on board. We have been focused on planning for new development. He talked about what staff was focused on. He talked about Glen Park being busy and full. Simpson is trying to get past the comp plan and foundational plan then we would be able to see what positions we are missing and are needed. If Council wants to have focus on new development and also have aggressive inroads in town, we'd have to start focusing now.

Plunkett asked about having a coordinated plan to review roadway width and see if sidewalks are on both sides of road. Simpson is making assumptions that what we have is what we want to keep in place. Rudimentary analysis is that savings won't necessarily come. Trying to get the maintenance cost down is going to be difficult. Simpson spoke further about the costs of total street reconstruction. He provided an example of Division Street.

Plunkett talked about Elm Street sidewalks being detrimental to wheelchair users. He talked about using staff time to see if we can cut down permeable surfaces.

Mueller asked about sewer break downtown. Do we already have plans in place if something were to happen? Simpson said with the exception of Hoffman, we don't. He provided an example of losing fence due to tornado at Hoffman. Downtown is patched. We try to take advantage of opportunities.

Morrisette mentioned the Ninth Street sewer. Simpson talked about the sewer being accelerated to get the project done.

Mueller likes having parameters around staff time, so they don't get burned out. There was discussion about the comp plan. Stroud talked about setting the comp plan and forgetting it.

Morrisette talked about Riverwalk and stormwater retention ponds being put off. We can't do Riverwalk until we do stormwater. He feels that project can be a standalone project. He would like Riverwalk on deck. It has been delayed for 15 years. It's time that we start to send a message that Riverwalk is important. Simpson talked about Lake George restoration project planning in 2026.

Simpson talked about the biosolids project. He talked about not doing the project. He is not a proponent of that. Morrisette said if biosolids is 50/50 right now, what are we going to put in its place? Let's put stormwater in place. Stroud said you may be able to free up \$2 million but we believe it will be \$4 million.

Simpson said we have a lot of preplanning to do. He said if you want to do it, we have to free up staff or get rid of projects. We may need to hire an engineer. We will have to figure it out. The project starts in 2026. Morrisette talked about wanting to start it sooner. Simpson said we hear you. He talked about planning. What engagement are you not willing to do? There are tradeoffs.

Stroud said the Lake George project is all in at \$3 million. It is a five to six-year project through 2030. Odeen asked how we can push this up. Morrisette said if biosolids resolves itself, he thinks there is some capacity. Can we get it resolved sooner? This needs to have priority sooner. He thinks downtown needs to be next.

Simpson said we don't have the money in the CIP to do it. He talked about the work Brandt has done to get money for projects and that gives him optimism. Simpson talked about the Mayor pursuing the Glen Park project. We are already at 110 percent staff capacity.

Stroud talked about other dominos being in place, timelines provided by Crystal, and TMDL planning. Stroud spoke about the process we need to do before we can get to it. Bjerstedt asked how confident are the numbers?

Karlsson said they staff's best estimate at this time. She is as confident she can be considering the current crazy times.

Mueller agreed with Morrissette. She talked about not having only one part of town shining. She thinks we should begin to intentionally focus on downtown. Odeen feels the downtown should benefit from the growth.

Simpson talked about Council not giving enough credit for its decisions and the regret of not being able to find a way to pull it up. He asked the Council to please provide feedback to himself, Brandt, Jason, or Sarah.

Simpson talked about putting the whole hog in, being skeptical, having shovel ready by 2024. We will know more in next three months. It was time to get the whole thing in the CIP. There is still concern about amount. If you build it, they will come.

Morrissette asked at what point do we identify the next the next industrial park. Simpson has an eye on land. It is the usual suspects. He is keeping an eye on surrounding areas of land.

The workshop was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk