

Downers Grove Township Capital Project Fund

(Budget Fund 6 on the FY 18/19 Appropriation, budget category 470)

Introduction

This document information, hopefully, helps guide the Township Board and administration in the annual budgeting process, and aids in prioritization, coordination, and sequencing of capital improvements.

History

Downers Grove Township has operated continuously since 1832. Townships were formalized in 1848, and still function according to provisions of the Township Act of 1874.

The current location of the Downers Grove Township Main office at 4340 Prince was purchased in 1981. It was originally planned for six medical offices, and when purchased by the Township was not finished inside. Floorplans were drawn up and the board approved space for all departments. Interior walls were erected, and, for the next 36 years, no further major work was performed. HVAC, windows, non-public facing doors, drainage, the basement, and the north side parking lot have remained essentially unchanged since construction.

The Township initially purchased five adjacent properties, removing a small apartment building and three single family homes, in anticipation of expanding the Township offices and north parking lot. The south parking lot was added via an Inter-Governmental Agreement with the Village of Downers Grove in 1987. One property was sold in 2015 to facilitate the Village redevelopment at Saratoga and Ogden Avenues.

Overview

This plan covers capital improvement projects for the Fiscal Years 2018-2019 through 2023-2024. This document identifies long term needs and proposes solutions for them. Downers Grove Township has a long-standing commitment to quality public services and thoughtful planning coupled with fiscal sobriety. The formalizes that commitment and provides for orderly and appropriately financed renovation and improvement of Township facilities. It is a financial tool that allows the Town Board to take a long-range view of the organization's needs. This process will serve the organization as part of a larger ongoing strategic planning effort.

The preparation and adoption of the current Capital Project Fund is an important part of DG Township's planning process. The CPF is designed to recognize, design, and implement projects that meet the future demands of the capital facilities. The CPF has a multi-year schedule that lays out Township projects and their anticipated associated costs. Over the five-year period of the CPF, it indicates work needing to be done to make the facilities safer, more secure, more energy efficient, and more accessible to all residents.

The number and variety of large and small projects requires sequencing so that the Township doesn't undo something to do something else. Professional services for a Space Efficiency Study, and a Master Site Plan allow for proper sequencing of projects, and provide a forward looking plan for usage of building space, as well as site space allocation. Costs associated with this project planning should be allocated to the CPF.

Financing

The CPF itself began as an informal "plan ahead" device, accumulating funds in the General Fund Reserve. In early 2017 this was identified as a less-than-ideal way to fund CPF projects, and was corrected for the FY18/19 budget year with the creation of the separate Capital Project Fund. For FY18/19 the Township creates a proper budget and reporting mechanism, and moves reserves from the General Fund to the CPF. No additional taxes or borrowing is required to create this fund.

In May we finished setting up the approved Capital Project Fund (CPF). This involved closing and moving funds from one bank to another, and transferring funds in the same bank from one account into another. The end result is the approved appropriated \$1,200,000 is now out of General Reserves, where it should not have been, and in a specific fund where it can be properly accounted for.

The 5-year CPF for FY18/19 through FY23/24 totals \$1,200,000. In FY18/19 the Town Board has allocated up to \$250,000 to be expended on capital improvements. This figure is malleable, as it's sourced from a multi-year fund.

As a multi-year fund, there will be some gray area on annual budgeting. What projects can be done in any given fiscal year, allocating those WAG costs into the budget category, and concentrating on getting those done are primary concerns. By using this approach there should be steady progress made each year. At the end of the FY23/24 the remaining funds, if any, may be returned back to the General Fund, or the CPF can be extended further for extended time-line and/or funding with additional budget planning.

Project Methodology

Projects and associated costs were identified via several sources:

1. The Department of Homeland Security facility report and recommendations from 2016;
2. Downers Grove Police Department security report and recommendations from 2017;
3. Downers Grove Fire Department safety report and recommendations from 2017;
4. Facilities Best Management Practices (BMP's) from various sources focused on long-term reduction of facilities costs.

Experience indicates final project costs usually are in excess of planned-for costs.

The CPF allows for some flexibility, allowing an opportunity for additions, deletions, or amendments. Currently the identified projects include WAGs, but are not limited to:

1. Enclosed exterior ADA compliant stairwell (\$65k);
2. Safety and security upgrades recommended in the confidential DHS facility report (\$200-350K);
3. Safety and security up grades recommended by the DG Police and Fire Department reports (\$30-50K);
4. Roof repair/replacement (\$101K);
5. Internal ADA compliant access to basement (\$40-250K);
6. Dumpster enclosure (\$5-10K);
7. HVAC replacement of all six current units \$80-120K);
8. Replacement of old refrigerator units with new Energy Star certified units (\$3-4K);
9. Reconfiguration of basement space to improve storage and security of Township records and servers, and also improved layout of the food pantry (\$2-5K)
10. Natural gas generator for UPS of critical building functions (\$45-75K);
11. Photovoltaic (PV) solar array for peak power utility cost reduction (\$75-125K).
12. Parking lot repair and upgrades (\$150-250K);

Some projects were built out and completed prior to the beginning of the CPF. Insulated HVAC ducting, high efficiency insulated window frames, LED lighting for the first floor, upgraded doors and locks, and a keycard security system for all employees were in the original task list, and are complete. These were budgeted and paid for out of the General Fund budget.

Safety and Security Initiatives

The specifics and nature of security and safety upgrades are intentionally vague, but the specific CPF projects increase the safety and security of the Township building for both employees and visitors. The August 2016 report addresses most, as well as additional issues.

ADA compliance is relatively new to this building. Door knobs have been replaced with lever type designs. The south parking strip added a handicapped parking space and ADA compliant sloped access. Plans are in progress to provide ADA compliant access to the basement.

The federal government named Township buildings in DuPage County as field distribution points in the event of any of several types of disaster events ranging from natural catastrophes to terrorist attacks. In that regard two main concerns stand out: the safety and security of the building and its occupants, and the availability of power to the building.

Access Initiatives

Safe access to and from the basement is an ongoing concern. The emergency egress window is inadequate to need. The existing stairway/stairwell is not ADA compliant. Moving Township records is a major task requiring boxes of papers weighing up to 50lbs. There is no other method than walking items up and down stairs with risers that are too high and treads that are too narrow. They're also slippery when wet.

The FISH Pantry in the basement is manned by volunteers. Many are senior citizens with limited strength and mobility. They serve customers, many also aged or with limited mobility. While the basement is being used to capacity, getting people and boxes of food up and down is an ongoing issue.

The Township has now addressed most external ADA compliance issues as well as main hallway access issues, but has not begun to address the costlier basement access issues. Limited Use, Limited Access (LULA) lifts, commercial-scale dumb waiters, interior and exterior stairs, that may or may not include chair lifts and conveyor belts, all are on the table. The two needs, moving people and product, point to somewhat different solutions.

Interior stairwell placement is problematic as it would require reconfiguration of office space. Exterior open stairwell placement is problematic due to current storm water regulations requiring significant expensive engineering studies. Enclosed exterior stairwell is a better solution, but more expensive than an open design. ADA compliant stairs themselves do not solve the issues of moving boxes of documents or food to and from the basement.

A commercial dumbwaiter provides a solution for moving product, but does not address people use. A LULA can be configured to look and act like an elevator, and is expensive. A full-blown elevator is very expensive, but would solve most issues of moving people and product. It's possible a heavy-duty LULA may work as a solution to move both carts of food or documents, and people, between the main floor and the basement.

The current emergency egress window is inadequate, and depending on what other changes are made, either goes away or needs to be completely redone. On a positive note, a repaired and upgraded egress window, well, and cover is a relatively low-cost project.

Energy and Environmental Initiatives

The energy efficiency projects completed and planned are a concerted effort by Downers Grove Township to ensure that taxpayer resources can be conserved through a reduction in energy utilization while simultaneously benefiting the environment through reducing the Township's carbon footprint. The additional benefit to taxpayers: fewer dollars spent on recurring long-term facility energy needs.

A suitably scaled NG or dual power generator will supply power to critical components in the event of a blackout or emergency situation. The current sump-pump-only battery backup is not adequate to the UPS needs of the building.

A small scale solar project will offset a portion of the Township main building's daylight electricity usage while also serving as a highly visible demonstration of the technology to residents, and of cost savings to other units of government.

Combined with other more conventional efficiency measures such as upgrading the HVAC system, Downers Grove Township has a goal to reduce energy usage by as much as 50% from FY16/17 to FY23/24.

Storm Water Remediation and Master Plan initiatives

The Township building exists on land that is all classified as LPD – Local Poor Drainage – area. This adds to the engineering cost and construction complexity of any exterior project. Additional parking has been a need for many years, yet potential projects in the past have been blocked due to the radical increase in non-permeable surface required.

While not currently on the project list, remediation efforts like changing out the uneven poured sidewalk on the south side to one of permeable pavers shows regulatory agencies good intent. Any parking lot expansion will likely have to incorporate storm water BMP's such as swales, rain gardens, and permeable surfacing. All of these add to project costs.

It's in the best interests of the Township to, at a minimum, investigate environmental projects such as rain gardens and bio-swales, as well as landscaping attractive to pollinator species. Should the opportunity arise to again address expanded parking, these elements will need to be brought into play as storm water mitigation devices.

Recommendations

This document provides the Township Board and administration direction in future fiscal year's capital budget development and execution. Future years additional funding need not be addressed at this time, as the fund itself was created with an estimate of total costs, and it is anticipated that current funding will suffice to meet the CPF projects as presented.

The Supervisor responsibility is to provide a planning sequence that minimizes disruptions to regular operations of the Township, and to make sure applicable contracts are valid, approved, and executed. As Treasurer it's the Supervisor's responsibility to make sure pertinent contracts are paid in a timely manner. It's also a best management practice to have a site master plan. All former parcels have now been rezoned and consolidated into a single INP-1 designation, so work on that can begin.

The Board has a responsibility to understand each project individually and in context of the larger CPF purpose. Pertinent contracts will require Board approval to move forward. Standard audit procedures apply, noting that on some larger contracts there may be benchmark payments scheduled. This should be spelled out ahead of time in the contract when approved.

The Capital Projects Fund is the mechanism allowing the Township to address current and future needs. Please feel free to contact the Supervisor's Office with any questions, comments, or inquiries regarding the information presented.

Prepared by Mark S. Thoman, Supervisor
July, 2018