



# VILLAGE OF SARANAC LAKE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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PREPARED BY THE  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE

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# PREFACE

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN TASK FORCE**

The Village of Saranac Lake owns and maintains over \$40 million in capital assets—including buildings, parks, equipment, streets, and stormwater, water, and sewer infrastructure—all of which require routine upgrades and replacement. The Village must also plan for future infrastructure needs to support long-term sustainability and growth.

Recognizing the need for a structured, transparent approach to infrastructure investment, the Board of Trustees established the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Task Force by resolution on March 11, 2024. The Task Force was charged with integrating existing capital project plans and evaluating potential new projects within a comprehensive framework that balances investment in both existing assets and future needs. It was also tasked with implementing a community engagement strategy.

**[See Appendix: Community Engagement Strategy and Results]**

Working with Municipal Solutions, Inc., the Task Force developed this Capital Improvement Plan. Upon adoption by the Village Board of Trustees, the CIP will serve as a strategic guide for infrastructure investment—supporting fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and alignment with community priorities.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a structured framework for aligning the Village of Saranac Lake's capital investments with its long-term goals for economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and public service delivery. The CIP serves as both an internal planning tool for budgeting and project coordination, and as a public document to communicate priorities to residents, funding partners, and regulatory agencies.

The Plan identifies 18 high-priority projects, totaling approximately \$115 million in identified needs, covering water and sewer systems, streets, parks, and public facilities.

## **Key Objectives:**

- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensure projects directly support adopted plans, policies, and community goals.
- **Infrastructure Resilience:** Invest in maintenance, upgrades, and critical infrastructure improvements.
- **Community Investment:** Enhance parks, waterfront access, recreational facilities, and public safety.
- **Financial Responsibility:** Employ fiscally sound funding strategies for all capital projects.

The CIP is a living document, to be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing needs, project status, and funding opportunities. Upon adoption, it will guide capital budgeting and project development, providing Village leaders, staff, and the public with a clear understanding of project priorities, funding strategies, and implementation timelines.



# BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The Village of Saranac Lake owns and maintains over \$40 million in capital assets, including public buildings, parks, equipment, streets, and water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure. Many of these assets are aging and require systematic upgrades or replacement. The Village also needs to plan for new infrastructure investments to ensure long-term sustainability.

To address this, the Village Board of Trustees established a Capital Improvement Plan Task Force on March 11, 2024, charged with creating a comprehensive plan that consolidates existing project lists, collects new project ideas, and prioritizes investments within a single framework.

Throughout 2024 and the first half of 2025, the Task Force worked with Municipal Solutions, Inc. to gather infrastructure data, review over two dozen adopted Village plans and studies, and solicit input from residents and stakeholders. This process resulted in the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan, which links long-range community goals with practical budgeting and project implementation strategies.

The CIP is designed as a multi-year financial planning tool—not a one-time report. It supports forward-looking decision-making by helping the Village:

- **Forecast capital needs**
- **Anticipate required funding**
- **Coordinate across departments**
- **Avoid unexpected infrastructure failures & emergency expenditures**

The CIP provides internal stakeholders (Board, management, department heads) and external partners (funders, regulators, community members) with a clear, organized approach to capital investment planning.



Effective capital planning begins with a clear understanding of the assets the Village owns and the infrastructure needs that must be addressed. The Village's capital portfolio includes:

- **Transportation Infrastructure:** Approximately 28 miles of Village-maintained streets, along with sidewalks, trails, bridges, and parking facilities, all essential for pedestrian and vehicular mobility.
- **Water Supply and Wastewater Systems:** A complex network of water sources, treatment facilities, distribution mains, sewer lines, pump stations, and a wastewater treatment plant. Portions of these systems are several decades old and require significant reinvestment to maintain service reliability and regulatory compliance.
- **Public Buildings and Facilities:** Includes administrative offices, police and fire stations, the DPW garage, and other operational buildings. These facilities require periodic upgrades to remain functional, efficient, and code-compliant.
- **Parks, Waterfronts, and Recreation Amenities:** Community assets such as playgrounds, riverwalks, parks, and waterfront access points support quality of life and tourism. These assets require ongoing investment for maintenance, accessibility, and modernization.

**Capital Project Threshold:**

For the purposes of this plan, capital projects are defined as investments with an estimated cost of \$50,000 or more. This threshold helps distinguish large, strategic projects from routine maintenance and ensures that the CIP focuses on investments requiring dedicated financial planning, cross-departmental coordination, and potential outside funding.



# CAPITAL PROJECT SELECTION

The CIP was developed with a focus on strategic alignment with the Village’s adopted plans and policies. The Village has a strong foundation of community planning, including the Comprehensive Plan (2013), Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2013), Arts and Culture Plan (2018) and Downtown Strategic Investment Plan (2018), among others. In total, over 20 adopted plans and studies were reviewed during the CIP process.

**Only projects documented in an adopted plan or policy—and sufficiently defined for evaluation—were advanced for scoring and prioritization.**

This approach ensures that the CIP reflects established community goals and that investments are grounded in prior planning and public input. In effect, the CIP operationalizes these plans by translating them into prioritized, actionable projects.

In addition to aligning with adopted plans, projects are expected to meet applicable Village policies and initiatives. These include standards such as the Complete Streets Policy for multi-modal access, and requirements set by the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) for water quality, shoreline protection, and public access. Other policy considerations incorporated during project design include:

- Green infrastructure and stormwater management
- Flood resilience (e.g., design for 100-year flood conditions)
- Public art integration
- Renewable energy use and energy efficiency
- Accessibility and recreation programming

These checkpoints help ensure each capital project advances not only infrastructure goals but also community priorities related to sustainability, safety, and public benefit.

**[See Appendix: Policies and Initiatives Checklist]**



The Village required a consistent, objective method for determining project priority. The Task Force developed a Project Prioritization Matrix as a decision-making tool, ranking projects based on the following criteria:

1. **Strategic Alignment:** Alignment with the Village’s strategic goals and adopted plans.
2. **Operating Budget Impact:** Impact on the Village’s operating budget, including maintenance, staffing, or financing costs.
3. **Financing Leverage:** Degree of external funding available and timing considerations.
4. **Risk Reduction and Asset Condition:** The extent to which a project mitigates significant risks to public safety or addresses critical asset deterioration.
5. **Legal or Regulatory Mandates:** Compliance with laws, regulations, or consent orders.
6. **Economic Impact:** Potential to stimulate economic activity, support businesses, create jobs, or expand the tax base.
7. **Community Impact:** Social or cultural benefits, including improvements to quality of life, community facilities, or accessibility.

Each criterion was assigned a score, with total scores calculated out of 100. This system allowed projects of different types to be compared consistently. The scoring process was iterative and adjusted based on feedback and information available. The Prioritization Matrix served as a structured tool—supplemented by professional judgment and community input—to finalize project rankings.

The Prioritization Matrix reinforces a disciplined, objective approach to capital budgeting—ensuring that limited funds are directed to the projects with the greatest combined benefit, risk reduction, and strategic value.

**[See Appendix: Prioritization Matrix]**



# PROJECT PROFILE OVERVIEW

The heart of the Capital Improvement Plan is the portfolio of projects that the Village of Saranac Lake intends to undertake or initiate.

As noted, the CIP Task Force identified and scored 18 priority projects over the \$50,000 threshold, that met the criteria of being defined, needed, and aligned with adopted plans.

These projects span all major sectors of Village infrastructure, reflecting a holistic approach to community improvement.

Collectively, they address critical maintenance, compliance mandates, and opportunities for enhancement that will shape the Village's future.

Each project is described in the appendices (with scope, justification, cost estimates, and funding considerations), but a narrative summary of the portfolio is provided here to illustrate how these investments advance Saranac Lake's strategic goals.

The key point is that the CIP provides a structure to capture all identified facility needs, prioritize them, and coordinate them with each other.

**[See Appendix: Projects List]**

# PROJECTS SCORED

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**A number of high-priority projects focus on Saranac Lake's streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities – the backbone of daily life and commerce.**

For example, the **Dorsey Street Parking Lot Redevelopment** is among the top-ranked projects. This project will redesign and resurface the central Dorsey parking lot to improve its functionality and safety. Upgrades include defined pedestrian walkways and raised curbs, a new bus stop to support public transit, and bioswales for stormwater management to reduce runoff into the Riverwalk. By creating a safer, more attractive parking area and a better connection between the downtown business district and the Saranac River waterfront, this project addresses both transportation and economic development goals.

Another flagship initiative is the **Village-wide Sidewalk Improvement Project**. This is conceived as a multi-year effort (approximately \$2 million total) to systematically replace or install sidewalks in high-priority areas. Guided by a prior engineering study (the 2012 Northwoods Engineering Sidewalk Inventory) and an upcoming updated inventory, the program targets corridors with deteriorated or missing sidewalks – for instance, sections of Shepard Avenue, Pine Street, and other pedestrian routes identified as gaps. The project will not only reconstruct sidewalks to be ADA-compliant and safe, but also add features like crosswalk improvements and curbing where needed. The community's strong support for walkability directly influenced the prominence of this project in the CIP.

Similarly, **Woodruff Street Corridor Improvements** will redesign a key downtown street to better accommodate bikes and pedestrians, creating a more inviting multimodal link through the village core. And on neighborhood streets like Church Street, planned improvements will add crosswalks, traffic calming, and streetscape enhancements to improve safety and quality of life for residents.

Together, these transportation projects aim to make Saranac Lake a safer, more connected community while supporting economic activity (attractive streets and sidewalks encourage visitors and shoppers).

# PROJECTS SCORED

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**Several of the most significant (and costly) CIP projects are those addressing the Village’s water and wastewater systems, which are essential services with direct impact on public health, environmental quality, and future development potential.**

The **Water Source and Distribution Project** is a comprehensive initiative to secure Saranac Lake’s future water. This project, estimated at over \$22 million, includes evaluating and potentially developing a new surface water source to diversify supply, as one of the Village’s existing wells has experienced water quality issues (high iron levels) and cannot reliably meet peak demand on its own. It also involves replacing aging water mains in problem areas – for example, along Lake Flower Avenue where old pipes and valves are prone to breaks – and upgrading the distribution system for better pressure and fire flow. By investing in this project, the Village intends to ensure a safe, abundant water supply for decades to come, while reducing the risk of discolored water and service disruptions. Notably, a detailed engineering plan for water system improvements was completed in 2024 by consultants (Suozzo, Doty & Associates), providing a roadmap that this CIP now moves toward implementation. The high priority of this project reflects both its alignment with regulatory requirements (clean water standards) and community priorities (clean, reliable drinking water was a top concern in public input).

On the wastewater side, the **Sewer Collection and Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Upgrades Project** represents one of the largest capital undertakings in the plan. Initially projected at \$34 million, this project’s cost was revised to approximately \$49 million in early 2025 to leverage federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The scope encompasses comprehensive improvements to the sewage collection system – repairing or replacing deteriorated sewer mains that are leaky or over capacity – as well as major upgrades at the WWTP to ensure it meets modern treatment standards and can handle future flows. Portions of this investment are expected to be offset by grants or low-interest loans (e.g. through the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation and FEMA), given the critical environmental importance of preventing sewer overflows and protecting water quality. In tandem, a related project addresses a particularly vulnerable segment of the sewer system known as the **“Swamp Line” trunk sewer**. This line runs through difficult terrain, has limited access, and is at high risk of failure. The project (which has secured FEMA hazard mitigation funding) will replace and flood-proof that sewer trunk, in two phases: an immediate repair phase followed by a major reconstruction and infiltration prevention phase. Completing the Swamp Line repair will significantly reduce the Village’s exposure to sewer overflows and environmental hazards in that area.

# PROJECTS SCORED

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**Enhancing community recreation opportunities and waterfront access is another major theme of the CIP. Saranac Lake's natural setting is one of its greatest assets, and the plan invests in making the most of these spaces for residents and visitors alike.**

For example, **Baldwin Park Improvements** will transform a small gateway park into a more welcoming and usable space. The project includes clearing overgrown areas to open up beautiful water views, installing interpretive signage about local history/ecology, improving parking and pathways, and adding amenities like benches, bike racks, and landscaping. The goal is to create an inviting spot that draws people to the waterfront and provides a pleasant stop for those entering downtown, thus also supporting economic activity in the village.

Likewise, **Riverside Park Upgrades** are identified for the Village's signature downtown park on Lake Flower. This project will add ADA-accessible features and a modern bandshell for performances, upgrade landscaping, and potentially relocate or improve seasonal facilities (like restrooms) to better serve events and daily use. A new bandshell, in particular, will bolster Saranac Lake's ability to host outdoor concerts and community events, enhancing cultural life downtown.

**Garwood Park**, a neighborhood park, is slated for new playground equipment, fencing repairs, and safety improvements, addressing both an ADA compliance goal and local family needs. **Prescott Park**, along Lake Flower's shoreline, will see shoreline vegetation restoration, a canoe/kayak launch, and defined spaces for seasonal activities like the Ice Palace in winter. These improvements not only provide recreation but also environmental benefits (erosion control, habitat enhancement).

All park and recreation projects were well-supported in public outreach (parks and waterfront projects garnered about 18% of support in the survey, reflecting high interest. By executing these projects, the Village will improve livability for residents, boost its appeal to tourists, and honor goals from plans like the Park Vision Plan and LWRP.

# PROJECTS SCORED

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**Ensuring that first responders and public servants have adequate facilities and equipment is another focus of the CIP.**

One of the more complex and long-term endeavors in this realm is the proposed **Emergency Services Complex**. A proposed concept is to consolidate the Village's fire department, police department, and rescue squad into a single modern complex (proposed at 33 Petrova Avenue) that would streamline operations. The new facility would be purpose-built with proper bays for fire apparatus, up-to-date communications systems for dispatch, training spaces, and accommodations for both career and volunteer responders. Currently, the fire and rescue services operate out of cramped, aging buildings that are not optimally designed for today's demands. A combined complex could foster better coordination among emergency services and reduce redundant costs (through shared meeting rooms, backup generators, etc.). However, at an estimated cost of \$30 million, this project has a large potential impact on village taxpayers. Its score reflects factors such as the impact it would have on Village finances if locally funded, and the fact that the concept is still being refined. Community feedback revealed support for improved facilities but also significant concern about cost and location. For these reasons, while the Emergency Services Complex remains in the CIP as a recognized need, it is categorized differently from other projects – essentially as a placeholder for long-term planning, contingent on further analysis, potential cost reductions, and securing outside funding.

In the nearer term, the CIP addresses public safety needs in more incremental ways. For instance, the plan calls for **Fire Department Equipment Replacement** on a scheduled basis. The Village's Heavy Rescue truck, a critical piece of fire/rescue apparatus, is nearing the end of its serviceable life. The CIP funds a replacement of this vehicle by 2027, consistent with the Fire Department's practice of replacing major trucks every 20 years. Upgrading to a modern rescue truck will improve firefighter safety and emergency response capabilities (with updated extrication tools, breathing apparatus support, etc.), and it can be budgeted via a combination of reserve funds and financing to spread out the cost. Keeping equipment up to date is a cost-effective way to maintain service levels.

# PROJECTS SCORED

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Another notable facilities project in the CIP is the **renovation of the historic 1-3 Main Street building** (also known as the “Power & Light” building).

This Village-owned property is an old electric generation building on the Saranac River, rich in history and potential. The CIP project allocates funds to restore the building’s hydroelectric generation capacity, alongside structural repairs and accessibility improvements. Essentially, the plan is to refurbish the turbine, penstock, and controls so that this facility can once again produce renewable power for the Village’s use. By doing so, Saranac Lake can offset municipal energy costs and showcase a sustainability initiative, all while preserving a unique historic asset.

This project scored moderately but offers a clear long-term payback and aligns with the Village’s Energy Master Plan (2022) goals for local renewable energy production.

It demonstrates the CIP’s creative approach to financially responsible projects – investing one-time capital to achieve ongoing cost savings and revenue generation (a theme also seen in smaller energy efficiency projects not detailed here).



# PIPELINE PROJECTS

In addition to the 18 priority projects that have been scored within the CIP, the Task Force is mindful of a variety of potential projects and ideas that are on the horizon but not yet ready for full inclusion in the CIP.

These pipeline projects are initiatives that may be important for Saranac Lake's future but lack complete definition, feasibility analysis, financial details, and/or official endorsement in an adopted plan as of now.

The CIP Task Force compiled a list of such ideas during its process, ensuring they remain visible for future consideration. They are not included in the current priority ranking and funding plan, but they form a living backlog of capital needs that the Village can develop and evaluate further over time.

By clearly distinguishing pipeline projects from the scored CIP projects, the Village achieves two things: (1) transparency that these ideas are on the table (so community members know they haven't been forgotten), and (2) a disciplined focus in the CIP on projects that are mature and actionable.

The Task Force recommends revisiting the project list and scores annually – as new information becomes available or as some of the pipeline ideas get fleshed out. New and revised projects can be developed into full project proposals, given a prioritization score using the same matrix, and added to the CIP proper.

In this way, the CIP process is continuous and adaptable: today's ideas can become tomorrow's funded projects, following planning, design, funding, and community vetting. This pipeline approach helps the Village stay prepared for future needs and signals to outside funding agencies what may be coming, even if not immediate.

**[See Appendix: Pipeline List]**

# PIPELINE PROJECTS

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Examples of pipeline ideas discussed by the Task Force are described below.

- **Expanded Recreation at Mt. Pisgah:** The Village’s ski hill and recreation center at Mt. Pisgah has long-term potential for upgrades (such as improved lodge facilities, expanded trails, or year-round uses). While not in the immediate CIP, the Task Force noted that continued improvements at Mt. Pisgah could be pursued as separate recreation/tourism projects, possibly in partnership with private or regional entities, once a clear master plan for the site is developed.
- **Village Sand Pit Property Planning:** The Village owns a “sand pit” property whose future use is under consideration. One idea is to develop it for public works or other municipal purposes, or possibly for housing or recreation. The CIP defers this until a concrete plan or adopted policy defines the project, but it remains on the radar as an asset that could be put to better use. Once a direction is set (perhaps via a feasibility study or public input), a capital project could be formulated and added to the CIP in a future update.
- **Flood Response and Stormwater Mitigation Plan:** In light of increasing flood risks (as seen in recent years’ heavy rain events), the Task Force floated the idea of a comprehensive Village flood resilience and response plan. This could lead to capital projects like floodwalls, pumping systems, or major drainage redesigns. At present, it’s an idea pending more data (some flooding issues are being tackled by the sewer/stormwater projects already in the CIP), but it is identified as a potential future initiative, especially as climate data evolves.
- **Additional Downtown Parking or Structured Parking:** As the Village grows, parking needs downtown might exceed the capacity of surface lots like Dorsey. A concept for a future parking structure or additional parking capacity is noted as a pipeline project. This would require significant investment and partnerships, so additional parking is not yet in the plan, but monitoring downtown development will inform if/when this becomes a priority.
- **Other Facility and Infrastructure Ideas:** The ideas list also includes items like expansion of the Village water system to unserved areas, potential new bike/pedestrian trail linkages beyond those already planned, and technology upgrades (such as fiber-optic network expansion or smart city infrastructure). These are recognized needs or opportunities, but without defined scopes or funding, they remain in the idea stage.



# FUNDING STRATEGY

The Village of Saranac Lake’s long-term capital funding strategy should be built on a balanced mix of local, state, federal, and private sources, with each funding approach tailored to the size, scope, and community impact of the project.

While the CIP includes estimated project costs and identifies potential funding sources, it is important to note that these estimates are based on publicly available data—some of which may be outdated or incomplete. Regular access to updated financial information, including detailed project scopes, cost estimates, and funding timelines, will be critical for future iterations of the CIP to support accurate forecasting, sound financial planning, and transparent decision-making.

# FUNDING STRATEGY

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## ■ FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS & AID

Aggressively pursuing grant opportunities is central to the CIP funding approach.

Programs such as the New York State Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds, USDA Rural Development programs, and others are targeted to support eligible projects.

For example, the Sewer Trunk/Swamp Line project is already approved for FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant funding, and the Village will seek NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation grants/loans for the WWTP upgrades. Grant funding is money (often with a required local match), which can dramatically reduce local costs – the CIP prioritizes projects that align with grant criteria to maximize this benefit.

A dedicated effort will be made each year to apply for relevant grants as cycles open (e.g. NYS Consolidated Funding Application, federal infrastructure grants, transportation funding for sidewalks, etc.).

## ■ MUNICIPAL BONDS / DEBT FINANCING

For large-scale projects that cannot be fully grant-funded, the Village will use long-term borrowing (bonds) to spread capital costs over the useful life of the asset.

This approach ensures intergenerational equity—future users contribute to the cost—and helps stabilize annual budgets.

Bond financing decisions will be guided by the Village’s debt management policies, with careful attention to: Existing debt service obligations, Statutory debt limits, Market conditions, Credit rating impacts, and Long-term budget capacity.

Projects with multi-decade benefits—such as Water System improvements and Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades—are appropriate candidates for bond financing, particularly when paired with low-interest loans from programs like the State Revolving Fund. The timing of bond issuance will be coordinated with project construction schedules, ensuring that debt service begins only when necessary and remains within manageable limits. (For context, the Village’s 2025 general fund operating budget is approximately \$7.2 million; new debt will be planned to avoid significant annual budget impacts.)

# FUNDING STRATEGY

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## LOCAL CAPITAL RESERVES

Saranac Lake will continue to set aside funds annually in capital reserve accounts for recurring needs.

Smaller projects (generally those under a certain cost threshold, e.g. \$100,000–\$200,000) and routine equipment replacements can be financed directly from the annual budget or saved-for in advance, avoiding interest costs. The CIP identifies which projects could be good candidates for capital reserves.

For instance, the Village has been reserving money each year for fire truck replacement; by 2027, those reserves combined with a short-term lease or bank loan will cover the Heavy Rescue Truck purchase without a large single-year spike. Similarly, park improvements may be funded incrementally through the regular budget or with the help of donations and volunteer labor to stretch dollars.

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER SOURCES

In select cases, the Village will explore public-private partnerships or developer contributions to advance projects.

If a private development benefits from a particular infrastructure improvement, cost-sharing arrangements (like sidewalk installation required of developers or joint grant applications with non-profits) will be pursued.

An example might be working with a housing developer to include infrastructure upgrades as part of a project. Additionally, some projects might tap into special revenue sources: for instance, if a parking district were created, fees could support a parking structure; or if tourism increases, occupancy tax revenue might help fund park amenities. While these are not guaranteed sources, the CIP remains open to leveraging any viable funding streams beyond the traditional tax base.

# NEXT STEPS



Once adopted, the CIP should serve as a decision-making tool for Village departments and the Board, guiding annual capital budget requests, aligning project timelines across departments, and ensuring coordinated infrastructure investments — such as sequencing utility upgrades with road reconstruction.

One of the guiding principles behind the CIP is to avoid sudden spikes in property tax or utility fees. To support this goal, the Task Force recommends phasing large capital projects and sequencing investments in a deliberate, manageable way.

For example, the Village’s estimated \$49 million sewer system improvement program will be broken into phases and pursued across multiple grant cycles, avoiding undue pressure on the Village’s budget in any single year. The CIP also provides flexibility: lower-priority projects can be deferred or rescheduled if fiscal conditions tighten, allowing the Village to focus resources on its most critical needs.

By planning multi-year funding strategies, the Village can forecast debt service obligations, manage cash flow, and align capital projects with the annual operating budget.

Best practices call for the CIP to be integrated into the Village’s annual budget process each year, the Board should review upcoming capital projects and formally appropriate funds for projects slated for the next fiscal year. In this way, the CIP serves as a rolling, multi-year capital budgeting framework that informs both capital investment decisions and their future operating cost impacts.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINANCIAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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The Village's capital financial strategy should emphasize:

- Maximizing external funding sources (grants, partnerships)
- Strategically using debt for long-term assets
- Paying cash for smaller, short-life assets
- Phasing investments to align with what taxpayers and ratepayers can sustain annually

To ensure the plan remains relevant and actionable, the Task Force recommends an annual fall review of the CIP, including opportunities for public input, prior to the Village's budget season. During this review, staff should:

- Update project status and timelines
- Reassess project priorities using the Prioritization Matrix
- Consider adding new projects or removing completed ones

The first year of the CIP should establish the Village's annual Capital Budget, while the outer years provide a framework for longer-term capital planning. This rolling approach equips the Board to make informed decisions about advancing, phasing, or deferring projects based on a clear, strategic roadmap. The CIP should also be referenced in grant applications, bond issuances, and intergovernmental communications to demonstrate that projects are part of a larger, community-driven plan.

The CIP is intentionally designed to be adaptable. Should unforeseen challenges arise—such as critical infrastructure failures or shifts in funding availability—the Village can reprioritize projects using the same transparent criteria. Conversely, if new funding opportunities emerge, the Board can accelerate projects within the CIP framework.

Finally, the Task Force encourages the Village to continue refining the CIP process over time. This may include forming a permanent Capital Planning Committee, adopting improved project proposal tools, and comparing outcomes year-to-year to strengthen accountability and planning.



# CONCLUSION

The Village of Saranac Lake’s Capital Improvement Plan establishes a structured framework for identifying and prioritizing infrastructure investments. The CIP enhances the Village’s competitiveness for state and federal funding by demonstrating project readiness, public engagement, and fiscal planning.

Each of the 18 prioritized projects was evaluated using a weighted matrix that considered alignment with adopted Village plans, regulatory compliance, community and economic impact, risk mitigation, and budget implications. Only projects with sufficient definition and justification were scored. Pipeline projects not yet ready for inclusion are documented for future consideration, ensuring the plan remains expandable and adaptive.

The CIP is intended for direct use in annual budgeting, grant applications, and interdepartmental coordination. The Task Force recommends that the Village Board use the first year of the CIP to select and fund specific capital projects as part of the annual Village budget. The remaining years of the CIP should be used as a planning tool to guide which projects are likely to be funded in future years. This allows the Board to make informed decisions about what to fund now, what to schedule for later, and how to coordinate timing across departments to avoid duplicated work and control costs.

By aligning capital spending with strategic community goals, leveraging diverse funding sources, and fostering transparent decision-making, the CIP strengthens the Village’s fiscal sustainability and resilience. With annual reviews, public engagement, and ongoing coordination, this living plan will ensure that capital investments meet both current needs and future opportunities — safeguarding community assets and quality of life for generations to come.

# APPENDIX

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY & RESULTS

The development of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) 2025-2030 was an effort designed to promote openness, gather valuable input, and align infrastructure investments with local priorities. The Village of Saranac Lake actively sought feedback from residents and stakeholders to inform capital project priorities and funding strategies.

The public engagement process was structured to:

- Educate the community on the importance of capital planning.
- Gather input on infrastructure needs and project priorities.
- Ensure transparency by involving residents in decision-making.
- Incorporate community values into project selection and prioritization.

### Engagement Methods

To achieve these goals, the Task Force implemented a multi-faceted engagement strategy, which included:

1. Community Survey – A survey collected resident feedback on priority capital projects, concerns, and funding preferences. Key findings included strong support for sidewalk and road improvements, water and sewer system upgrades, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. (28 responses collected).
2. Public Open Houses – Two interactive open-house events allowed residents to engage with Task Force members, provide feedback on project lists, and weigh in on project ranking criteria.
3. Village Board Presentation – A formal presentation of the draft CIP was held during a regularly scheduled Village Board meeting.

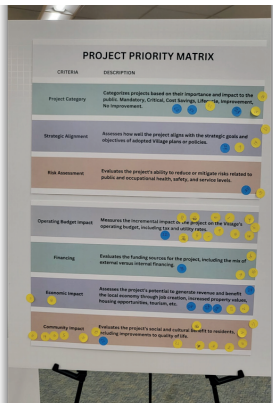
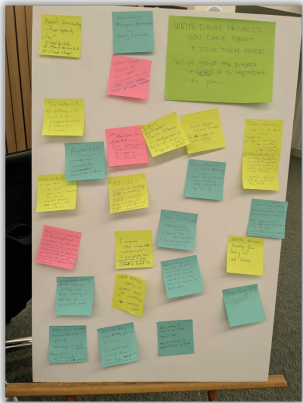


# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY & RESULTS

## Results & Key Takeaways

Community engagement efforts highlighted several priority areas that residents felt strongly about:

- **Sidewalk and Road Improvements:** Residents emphasized the need for comprehensive sidewalk and street repairs, particularly on Cedar Street, Park Avenue, Kiwassa Road, and Algonquin Apartments to Lake Street.
- **Water and Sewer System Upgrades:** Participants stressed the importance of upgrading aging infrastructure to prevent costly failures, improve water quality, and enhance stormwater management. Issues along Cedar Street, Crossfield Avenue, and near the Best Western on Rt. 86 were specifically identified.
- **Parks and Recreation Enhancements:** Public feedback strongly supported improvements to Garwood Park (ADA compliance, fencing repairs), Prescott Park, and waterfront access projects.
- **Public Safety Facilities:** While there was consensus that police, fire, and EMS need facility upgrades, significant community debate emerged around location, cost, and scope of the proposed Emergency Services Complex. Many residents advocated for renovating existing buildings or repurposing the Armory site.
- **Green Infrastructure & Flood Prevention:** Several community members called for enhanced flood mitigation efforts downtown, shoreline stabilization on Lake Flower Avenue, and strategies to reduce stormwater runoff impacts.
- **Public Transportation & Accessibility:** Rail trail connectors, improved pedestrian crossings, and ADA accessibility at key locations were among the most frequently mentioned concerns.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY & RESULTS

## Incorporating Public Input into the Final Plan

The feedback received from residents directly influenced the final Capital Improvement Plan by:

- Refining Project Prioritization – The prioritization matrix was adjusted to place greater weight on community impact and economic benefit, in response to survey feedback.
- Adding Key Projects – Several new projects identified through public input—including rail trail connectors, ADA accessibility improvements, sidewalk expansions, and stormwater drainage fixes—were incorporated into the final plan.
- Adjusting Funding Strategies – Based on concerns about affordability, the plan placed greater emphasis on securing grants and utilizing phased implementation strategies to reduce financial strain on taxpayers.
- Enhancing Public Engagement – The Task Force recommended the Board commit to an annual review and public engagement to maintain community involvement beyond plan adoption.



**Capital Improvement Plan Survey**

The Village of Saranac Lake is creating a 7-year Capital Improvement Plan to guide investments in our community's buildings, parks, streets, water and sewer systems, and more. We want your input!

This quick survey gives you the chance to tell us:

- What projects you think are **most important** for the Village to complete
- Why those projects matter to you
- Any feedback on projects the Village should **not** prioritize

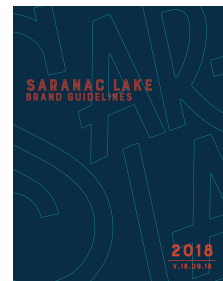
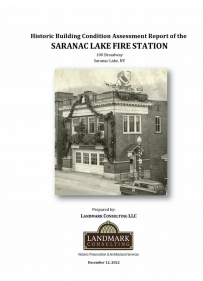
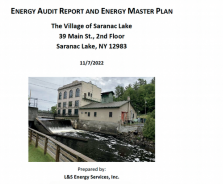
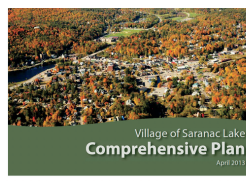
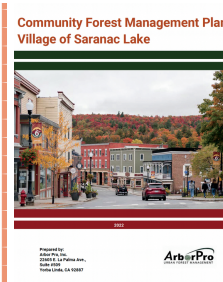
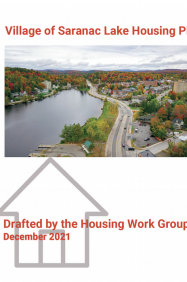
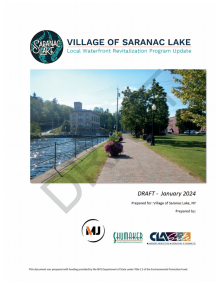
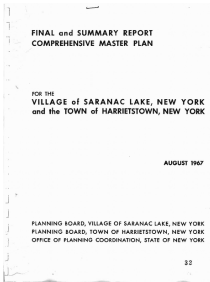
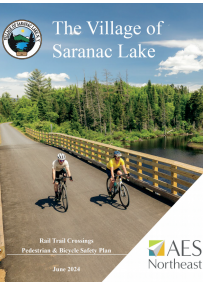
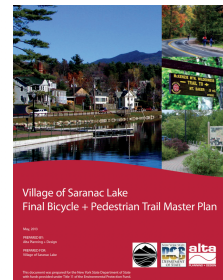
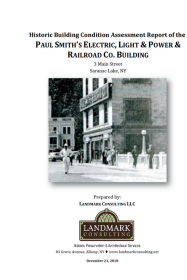
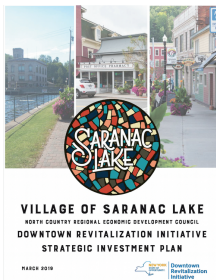
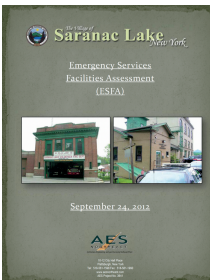
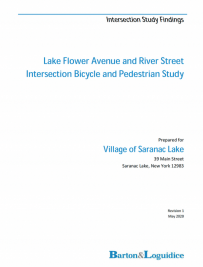
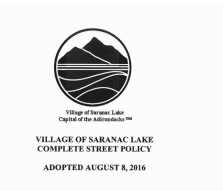
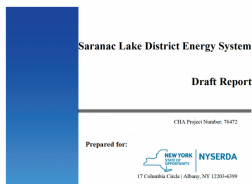
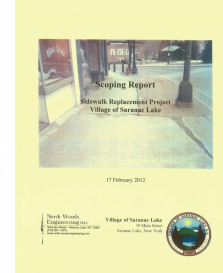
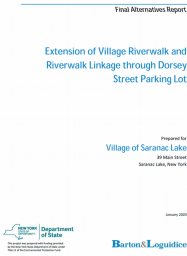
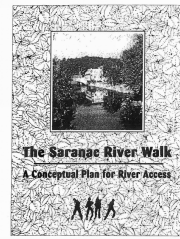
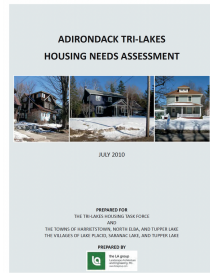
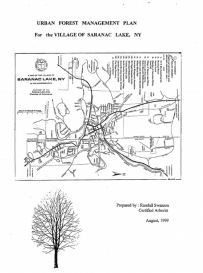
Take the survey!  
Scan the QR code or visit  
<https://forms.office.com/r/ar2Mp87B3a>  
Deadline: October 31st

# ADOPTED PLANS, POLICIES, & STUDIES

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3 Main Street Historic Assessment	2018
100 Broadway Historic Assessment	2022
Arts and Cultural Master Plan	2018
Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Plan	2013
Brand Guidelines	2018
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	2008
Comprehensive Plan	2013
Destination Master Plan	2009
District Energy System	2023
Downtown Strategic Investment Plan	2019
Downtown Vision Concepts	2007
Emergency Services Facilities Needs Assessment	2012
Emergency Services Facility Feasibility Study	2023
Energy Master Plan	2022
Forest Management Plan	2022
Housing Plan	2021
Lake Flower Avenue River Street Plan	2020
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)	2024
Park Vision Plan	2018
Public Health Emergency Plan	2001
Rail Trail Crossings Safety Plan	2024
Riverwalk Dorsey Parking Lot Plan	2020
Sidewalk Replacement Report	2012
The Saranac River Walk Plan	1992
Tri-Lakes Housing Needs Assessment	2010
Wastewater Treatment Plant Evaluation	2021
Water Source & Distribution Evaluations	2024
Inflow and Infiltration Study	2020
FEMA Phase 1, 2, 3, 4	2020

# ADOPTED PLANS, POLICIES, & STUDIES



# POLICIES AND INITIATIVES CHECKLIST

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While the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) did not evaluate each proposed project against all adopted Village policies and initiatives during the prioritization process, implementers are expected to apply this checklist during project planning and design.

The purpose of this checklist is to ensure that all capital projects—regardless of type or funding source—align with key local priorities related to sustainability, public health and safety, accessibility, and economic development. Design teams and department leads should review and incorporate applicable policies at the earliest stages of project development to maintain consistency with the Village’s long-term goals and regulatory commitments.

This alignment will also strengthen the Village’s position in seeking outside funding by demonstrating that projects are advancing adopted community strategies.

# POLICIES AND INITIATIVES CHECKLIST

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## VILLAGE OF SARANAC LAKE CHECKLIST

- Water Quality** – Establish ongoing partnerships with state agencies for fish stocking, boat decontamination, and road sand/salt management (LWRP).
- Water Access** – Implement the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan to improve recreation, install boat docks, rentals, and enhance waterfront aesthetics (CEDs).
- Shoreline Protection** – Conduct assessments and invasive species inventories to identify riparian restoration needs (LWRP).
- Flood Zone Management** – Ensure development and infrastructure consider 500-year floodplain data (LWRP).
- Green Infrastructure** – Identify cost-effective green infrastructure applications in parking lots and along the Saranac River (LWRP).
- Complete Streets** – Ensure all transportation projects follow the Complete Streets policy, emphasizing multimodal access and safety.
- Safe Routes to School** – Develop safe bicycle and pedestrian routes for school children (Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan).
- Public Art** – Install artwork in public spaces, including downtown and parks, per the Streetscape Master Plan.
- Net Electrical Metering** – Maximize energy savings and revenue for municipal operations.
- Recreation Program** – Develop free or low-cost water safety courses and recreational equipment rentals for residents and visitors (LWRP).

# PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

Village of Saranac Lake: Capital Improvement Plan				
Project Priority Matrix				
#	Criteria	Description	Score	Scoring Description
1	Strategic Alignment	Assesses how well the project aligns with the strategic goals and objectives of adopted Village plans or policies.	15	Directly aligned with Comprehensive Plan OR 2 or more adopted Village Plans and/or Policies
			5	Directly aligned with 1 adopted Village Plan and/or Policy
			0	No alignment
2	Operating Budget Impact	Measures the incremental impact of the project on the Village's operating budget, including tax and utility rates.	15	Decrease in operating costs - decreased tax or utility rates
			10	No change in operating costs - tax levy or utility rate neutral
			5	Increase in operating costs up to 5% - increases tax levy or utility rates
			0	Increase in operating costs greater than 5% - increases tax levy or utility rates
3	Financing	Evaluates the funding sources for the project, including the mix of external versus internal financing.	15	Funded 100% from external sources AND must proceed immediately in order to leverage use of funds
			10	Funded 100% from external sources (i.e. capital grants) OR Funded 50%-99% AND must proceed immediately in order to leverage use of funds (ie. signed contract)
			5	Funded 50% to 99% from external sources
			0	Funded less than 50% from external sources
4	Economic Impact	Assesses the project's potential to generate revenue and benefit the local economy through job creation, increased property values, housing opportunities, tourism, etc.	15	Substantial economic benefit to the local economy
			10	Moderate economic benefit to the local economy
			5	Minimal economic benefit to the local economy
			0	No economic benefit to the local economy
5	Community Impact	Evaluates the project's social and cultural benefit to residents, including improvements to quality of life.	15	Substantial social benefit to the quality of life of residents and/or contribution to community character
			10	Moderate social benefit to the quality of life of residents and/or contribution to community character
			5	Minimal social benefit to the quality of life of residents and/or contribution to community character
			0	No social benefit to the quality of life of residents and/or contribution to community character
6	Risk Assessment	Evaluates the project's ability to reduce or mitigate risks related to public health and/or safety by addressing deficiencies in service delivery or infrastructure reliability. Not mandatory but are necessary for maintaining infrastructure in order to meet current service levels and maintain a state of good repair.	15	Substantial reduction of risk to the public OR Substantial increase in service level
			10	Moderate reduction of risk to the public OR Moderate increase in service level
			5	Minimal reduction of risk to the public OR Minimal increase in service level
			0	No impact
7	Legal Requirement	Assesses the extent to which the project ensures compliance with legal, regulatory, or safety mandates.	10	Address an urgent legal, safety, or regulatory requirement where a consent order, judgment, fine, or penalty has been levied, demonstrating the necessity for immediate action. These projects are prioritized for their critical nature and direct implications.
			5	Address anticipated legal, safety, or regulatory requirements or mandates that are not yet critical but are foreseeable and necessary to ensure future compliance and avoid potential consequences. These projects are prioritized based on their proactive nature and long-term importance.
			0	Not legally required
Total				

# PROJECT LIST

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## **Parking Lot: Dorsey**

This project includes the full redesign and resurfacing of the Dorsey Street Parking Lot to enhance safety, accessibility, and stormwater management. Improvements will include raised sidewalks, new curbing, defined pedestrian crosswalks, bioswales, and enhanced connectivity to the Riverwalk and downtown core.

## **Water Source & Water Distribution**

This project addresses system reliability by identifying a water source (e.g., McKenzie Pond), remediation of the offline well, replacing aging water mains, and improving water quality through infrastructure upgrades. Specific improvements include line replacements on Lake Flower Avenue and pedestrian safety enhancements along the corridor.

## **Sidewalk Improvements**

This multi-year initiative will replace deteriorated sidewalks and install new segments in priority areas identified through engineering assessments. Improvements will also include ADA-compliant curb ramps, crosswalk enhancements, safety upgrades in high-traffic pedestrian zones, and close critical network gaps in underserved neighborhoods.

## **Garwood Park**

Garwood Park will be upgraded with modern, ADA-accessible playground equipment, improved site safety features, and landscaping. Amenities such as benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles will support expanded use.

## **Baldwin Park**

Baldwin Park will be redeveloped to improve shoreline views, circulation, and public access, incorporating interpretive signage and low-impact design features. Amenities such as benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles will support expanded use.

## **William Wallace / Lake Colby Beach**

This project will redevelop Lake Colby Beach to include beach area restoration, construction of a year-round pavilion, a children's play area, and kayak/canoe storage. It also includes upgrades to the Lake Colby Connector to address drainage issues, improve sightlines, and enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility.

# PROJECT LIST

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## **Riverwalk**

Improvements to the Riverwalk will address existing maintenance needs and introduce placemaking features such as wayfinding, lighting, and seating. The goal is to enhance year-round usability, visual appeal, and riverfront connectivity.

## **Riverside Park**

Riverside Park upgrades will feature a new performance bandshell to accommodate community events and programming. Improvements will include shoreline vegetation restoration, relocation of seasonal restrooms for better access, and new site amenities such as benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles to support expanded use.

## **Sewer Trunk and Swamp Line**

This FEMA-funded hazard mitigation project involves phased replacement of the aging Swamp Line trunk and lateral sewer lines in a flood-prone, low-access area. Phase 1 will implement immediate repairs, followed by Phase 2 full reconstruction to reduce infiltration, overflows, and environmental risks.

## **Boothe River Park**

This project proposes the construction of a whitewater wave feature on the Saranac River near Route 3/Lapan Bridge as part of a downtown river activation strategy. Scope includes river access improvements, signage, and adjacent site amenities to create a recreational anchor along the waterfront corridor.

## **Church Street**

Church Street improvements will include new and repaired sidewalks, upgraded pedestrian-scale lighting, and wayfinding signage to enhance safety and accessibility. These streetscape upgrades will create a more walkable, ADA-compliant connection between River Street and Bloomingdale Avenue.

## **Fire Dept. Equipment Replacement**

The project includes the planned replacement of the Village's Heavy Rescue Truck with a new vehicle that meets current safety and operational standards. The replacement will enhance reliability, improve response capabilities, and ensure compliance with requirements.

# PROJECT LIST

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## **Recreation Fields / Old Land Fill**

This project will convert the closed and capped landfill into multi-use recreation fields. It will provide new athletic and community event space, expand recreational access for residents, and transform an underutilized property into a productive public asset.

## **Prescott Park**

Improvements to Prescott Park will include shoreline stabilization, kayak/canoe launch, improve pedestrian access, and enhancements to support year-round activity. Amenities such as benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles will support expanded use. The site will also be improved for the Ice Palace infrastructure.

## **Woodruff Street Corridor**

The Woodruff Street corridor will be redesigned to support multi-modal use pedestrians and cyclists. including improved sidewalks, crosswalks, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian-scale infrastructure to enhance safety and connectivity between neighborhoods and downtown.

## **Sewer Collection & WWTP**

This project includes upgrades to the Village's sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant, addressing aging infrastructure, capacity limitations, and regulatory compliance. The scope reflects funding through federal infrastructure programs.

## **1-3 Main Street**

This project will restore the historic hydroelectric infrastructure at 1-3 Main Street through rehabilitation of the turbine, penstock, and control systems. The upgrades will enable on-site renewable power generation to offset municipal energy costs while preserving a Village-owned historic asset.

## **Emergency Services Facilities**

This project proposes a combined Emergency Services building at 33 Petrova Avenue to consolidate police, fire, and ambulance services in a single facility. The building will modernize response operations, improve operational efficiency, improve coordination, and meet functional requirements.

# PIPELINE / IDEAS LIST

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## **Village-Owned Buildings**

17 Main Street  
24 Depot Street  
Lake Flower Lift Station  
Mechanics (Central) Garage  
WWTP (Building)  
Water Tank (View Street)

## **Other**

Depot Street Plan  
Indoor Courts or Multi-Sport Facility  
River Street & Lake Flower Avenue (NBT Intersection)

## **Village-Owned Infrastructure**

Parking Lots  
Streets  
Sidewalks  
Sandpit  
Urban Trees  
Wayfinding Signage

## **Village-Owned Parks & Trails**

Alpine Terrace Pathway  
Berkeley Green  
Hydro Point Park  
Mt Pisgah Recreation Center  
Mt Pisgah Connector Trail  
Riverfront Park  
Skatepark  
Ward Plumadore Park  
William Morris Park  
World War 1 Memorial Park