

Memo

To: Board Chairs, Department Heads
From: Select Board, Select Board Policy Sub Committee (PSC)
Subject: Proposed Town-Wide Capital Planning Committee and Process
Date: November 4, 2025

On September 30, 2025, and October 28th, 2025, the Select Board discussed the PSC's draft document to create a Town-Wide Capital Planning Committee (the Committee). Next steps identified in the process circulating the current draft document to department heads and boards to seek feedback across the Town. To that end, please find attached the September 25, 2025 memo from the PSC to the Select Board introducing the concept of the Committee, followed by the current draft proposal which reflects initial Select Board feedback and comments.

For any board, committee or commission ("board") that is interested in commenting on the proposed draft, members of the Select Board's Policy Sub-Committee (Kenny Largess and Colette Aufranc) would like to come to a board meeting, give an overview of the proposal and take feedback. Colette Aufranc will act as point person to schedule time on a public agenda. We look forward to hearing from you.

Marjorie Freiman
Select Board Chair

Memo

To: The Select Board
From: Policy Sub Committee (PSC)
Subject: Town Wide Capital Planning Process
Date: September 25, 2025

The Town has an existing Capital Planning process that is conducted between department heads which brings forward the Five -Year Capital Plan. The Select Board has recently identified an emerging challenge with a significant number of capital projects being proposed (Town-Wide Financial Plan (TWFP) [presented at Annual Town meeting in 2025](#)). The Select Board finds it prudent to establish a Town-wide Capital Committee. This memo summarizes the thought process behind the development of a Town-Wide Capital Planning Process, the purpose, goal and framework of the committee, and suggested next steps.

Why Establish a Town-Wide Capital Planning Committee?

- *Converging Capital Needs and Rising Costs.* The Town is entering a period where major projects totaling up to \$400 million are emerging. Construction costs are rising, debt affordability is tightening, and multiple departments are advancing projects at the same time. Without a structured, transparent process, the risk is that capital projects will be considered in isolation, which can drive up costs and place unsustainable pressure on taxpayers. Establishing a Town-Wide Capital Planning Committee allows a more holistic approach to capital prioritization.
- *Best Practices in Capital Planning.* [From Government Financial Officers Association \(GFOA\)](#) - The capital infrastructure built and maintained by local government is essential for a thriving community. A big part of the challenge is deciding how to allocate a limited budget between competing projects and interests. Usually, these competing interests seek to gain as much as possible from the budget for themselves. When everyone does this, the budget becomes overburdened, and the financial foundation of local government becomes compromised. A prudent multi-year capital plan identifies and prioritizes expected needs based on a strategic plan, establishes project scope and cost, details estimated amounts of funding from various sources, and projects future operating and maintenance costs.
- As discussed above, Wellesley has many competing capital project needs. Wellesley does not have a Town-wide planning committee conducting this work in public which, is a common practice in municipalities, and a recommended best practice per Division of Local Services (DLS) - see [guidance](#).
- [Select Board Commitment in FY26 Work Plan.](#) The Select Board included the Development of a Town-Wide Capital Planning process in its work plan for FY26, specifically “to work closely with Executive Director (ED), Finance staff, Facilities Director, and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive capital planning processes

(Policy, Prioritization, Funding).” This work plan item is identified as a goal in the evaluation process for the ED and the Facilities Director.

Establishment of Town-Wide Capital Planning Committee

- Purpose of the Capital Committee To systematically assess and recommend capital projects that reflect the Town’s strategic needs, prioritize fiscal responsibility, and supports financially sustainable municipal building maintenance and new builds, land purchases for preservation or other municipal purposes, or other municipal capital needs.
- Goal of the Capital Committee To provide a comprehensive, transparent, and data-driven approach to capital planning, ensuring that proposed projects align with the Town’s vision, budgetary and staffing capacity, and long-term infrastructure goals.
- Framework A committee would be established through Town Meeting action with bylaws defining key elements. The committee would be subject to Open Meeting Law and meetings would be televised. Attached as Exhibit A.

Next Steps

- Seek Board feedback on initial concepts
- Work with Town Counsel to identify bylaw amendments (existing process and bylaws are attached as Exhibit B to this memo)
- Review existing financial policies for required revisions (see Exhibit B for links)
- Review existing budgetary guidance for required revisions (see Exhibit B for links)