



Penny for Parks Annual Capital Plan Development Process

2019-20 Update

2019 marks the 10th years since the first Penny for Parks project was implemented. This year we are revisiting the Penny for Parks review and ranking process and hope to embark on a larger project outreach effort to solicit community requests later in the year.

Capital Funding

Parks capital improvement projects have a variety of funding mechanisms, including but not limited to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Penny for Parks (PFP), Park Impact Fees (PIF), the Sustainable Bond, Bike Path Improvement Maintenance Fund (BPIMF), Conservation Legacy Program Fund (CLPF), the Perpetual Care Fund (PCF), Trees and Greenways (T&G), General Fund (GF), private donation, and state and federal resources. All of these funding sources have restrictions as to the types of projects they may support. Flexibility is required to ensure that amenities in need of support are aligned with appropriate resources. This document focuses on the department process specifically in relation to the Penny for Parks (PFP) program.

PFP Management & Staffing

The Parks Planning Division works under the direction of the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront (PRW) Director, and provides three distinct functions to support the implementation and successful completion of parks improvements projects. The first function is the planning and prioritization of all parks capital improvement projects. The second is the management and oversight of these projects during design and construction. The final function is communication and outreach. The team is led by the Parks Comprehensive Planner, who oversees two Project Coordinators and a Marketing and Outreach Manager.

Parks Planning works in close coordination with the Parks Division which is led by the Superintendent of Parks Operations & Maintenance. The Parks Division is comprised of technically based professionals that include the crews of the City Arborist, Grounds Manager, Land Steward, Facilities Manager and Cemetery Assistant Superintendent.

The Parks Comprehensive Planner oversees the overall management of Penny for Parks and other parks capital improvement projects with the support of the outlined staff and with direct support from the designated Penny for Parks Project Coordinator. The other Project coordinator is largely dedicated to the Bike Path Improvement Project.

An internal review team has been identified annually to review potential PFP and parks capital improvement projects. This team consists of the PRW Director, Parks Comprehensive Planner, Parks Superintendent, Parks Project Coordinators, along with support/input from other relevant divisions and City departments.



I. Penny for Parks

PFP is an annual funding plan for parks capital improvement projects. In 2008, PFP was approved by voters as a parks improvement fund and is supported by a dedicated tax. By resolution, PFP is to be used exclusively for parks capital improvement needs. Eligible projects include the repair, renovation, replacement, or expansion of existing park and community garden facilities as well as the construction of new facilities in existing parks and community gardens. Funds not spent in one year carry over to the following fiscal year and remain in the PFP fund for this purpose until spent.

PFP is also a short and long-range financial planning and project implementation tool developed to address community needs for the ongoing improvement of parks facilities. Through this process, BPRW is able to schedule the phased implementation of improvements over time and better identify funding strategies.

General management practices for the fund inherently require appropriations to be responsive to: emerging projects, neighborhood interests and community values, trends in park development, capital initiatives, public and private partnerships, available grants and emergency repairs. It is in this spirit that BPRW has managed these funds since the program's inception. Derived from the Grand List, the average PFP allocation is \$370,000 annually. Targeted improvement categories include: playgrounds, courts, athletic fields, seasonal park facilities, standard equipment replacement, general park repairs, emergent and urgent projects, and staffing support.

Since 2012, a portion of the annual PFP allocation has been used to support the Parks Project Coordinator regular, full-time position. Each year, approximately \$48,500 was reserved for this role which is essential to project implementation. In 2018, the allocated funding was shifted to another funding source, but this may be switched back in the future.

PFP projects vary in dollar value, may be recurring, generally have a multi-year useful life, and typically result in fixed assets. Reserve funds are to be used across various projects and are not necessarily appropriated to a specific project, allowing the city to be responsive to critical, emergent needs and to maximize opportunities.

The 2008 PFP Resolution specifies that the annual budgeting process shall be authorized by the City Council. The PFP program is designed to be updated on an annual basis through the operating budget adoption process and through direct amendment. In this manner, it becomes an ongoing fiscal planning tool that continually anticipates future costs and funding sources.

PFP is fluid in nature, with projects added and deleted from the approved list as a result of adjusted funding, project completion, or urgency with respect to safety. The PFP annual project list names each improvement and attempts to identify sources to fund all components. It indicates what will be constructed where, and estimates when and at what cost.

PFP represents the best efforts to allocate available resources toward parks projects that provide the most benefit for the residents of Burlington. The program is reviewed each year to reflect



changing community priorities within the larger framework of parks capital need and their impacts on use, operations, scheduling, and coordination with related projects.

A project’s inclusion in the PFP annual plan does not commit BPRW to funding and completion. Available funds, taxing capacity, and debt capacity may require that some projects be deferred beyond the years in which they are initially programmed for completion, or removed from the annual capital plan if staff review processes confirm an alternate priority.

II. Parks Annual Capital Plan Development: Public Requests, Screening, and Communication

The Parks Annual Capital Plan Development Schedule (see attachment) has been updated to ensure participation, consistency, transparency, completion of improvement projects, and alignment to community values. The program process is as follows:

1. Public Project Requests Accepted Year-round

At any point during a given fiscal year, Burlington residents have the opportunity to inform BPRW of potential PFP or parks project suggestions by submitting a Project Request Form. This form is available online at www.enjoyburlington.com.

2. Project Screening

On an annual basis the internal review team will screen public project requests using standard evaluation criteria to rank and prioritize each improvement project. Each project will be scored using the following criteria to reflect the immediacy of the need.

Health, Safety & Accessibility	<i>Project will improve the facility with regards to public health, welfare and safety.</i>
Serviceability & Lifespan	<i>Project currently exceeds its service life.</i>
Parks & Rec Master Plan Alignment	<i>Project supports efforts towards Burlington parks system master planning.</i>
Capital Plan Alignment	<i>Project supports efforts towards 10-year Capital Improvement Plan implementation.</i>
Federal/State/Local Mandate	<i>Project is required by Federal or State regulation, or by City Council ordinance.</i>
Alternative Funding Sources	<i>Project leverages local, Federal, State, grant, or private funding.</i>
Design & Aesthetics	<i>Project will visually, culturally and/or historically improve the image & quality of the parks system.</i>
Best Management Practices	<i>Project supports and/or improves best management & maintenance practices.</i>
Operations & Efficiencies	<i>Project will improve efficiencies in staffing, maintenance, or utilities or reduces future capital burden.</i>
Environmental Impacts	<i>Project will lessen impact on the natural environment and/or supports resource conservation.</i>
Programming	<i>Project will improve the operational aspects of recreational programming.</i>
User Base	<i>Project has a significant user base.</i>
Revenue Opportunities	<i>Project will directly or indirectly increase BPRW revenue generation.</i>

A project will receive 1-2 or 3 points per criteria. If specific criteria do not apply to a project, no points will be assigned. The project’s criteria points will be summed to generate a maximum project point value of 39. The review team will consider project point total in terms of



prioritization, along with other impacting factors such as funding sources, distribution of resources, project bundling, staff work plans, and schedule to develop the Parks Annual Capital Plan, which will correlate to BPRW's Strategic & Master Plans and the City's 10-Year Capital Plan.

Project screening may involve additional staff visits to the proposed facility or project site and include the acquisition of estimates. Other City departments and consultants may provide technical support in determining possible solutions and cost estimates. Parks screening criteria is aligned with CIP screening criteria so that projects may be weighed within the framework of city-wide capital need.

Staff will then compile a draft of the Parks Annual Capital Plan Staff that includes prioritized, publically requested projects in addition to staff-recommended projects derived from BPRW's Strategic & Master Plans and the City's 10-Year Capital Plan.

3. Discussion of Penny for Parks community applications
Staff will provide the list of Penny for Park applications with suggested ranking to the Commission in late fall. These will be projects that are anticipated to be completed in the same fiscal year or the summer of the following fiscal year and are under \$40,000. At this public meeting, those that submitted projects have the opportunity to share their project and staff will explain the ranking. The goal will be to approve the community requests at the late fall meeting.
4. Discussion of Parks Annual Capital Plan Draft with Parks Commission
Staff will introduce the Parks Annual Capital Plan Draft to the BPRW Commission in mid-winter. At this public meeting residents and Commission members may provide input on the development of the Parks Annual Capital Plan.
5. Approval of Parks Annual Capital Plan by the Parks Commission
Annually, the BPRW Commission will formally approve the Parks Annual Capital Plan – prior to staff's annual communication to the Board of Finance and City Council. This meeting, anticipated to take place each April, is also a public meeting where residents may provide input on the development of the Parks Annual Capital Plan.
6. Communication of Parks Annual Capital Plan to the CAO, Board of Finance & City Council
The feedback generated from the BPRW Commission meetings and public input will be incorporated to the Parks Annual Capital Plan. BPRW staff will prepare a recommendation to the CAO, Board of Finance, and City Council for their review and comment.
7. Approval of Parks Annual Capital Plan by the City Council
Feedback from the Mayor's Administration and City Council will be incorporated to the Parks Annual Capital Plan and submitted for final approval by the City Council.