

CIP vs. Council Legislative Priority List

Planning Commission Reference • City of Dillingham • April 2026

Attribute	Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Planning Commission	Legislative Priority List City Council
Purpose	Plans, prioritizes, and sequences capital projects over 6 years to guide investment decisions and infrastructure management.	Communicates the City's funding requests and policy positions to the Alaska State Legislature for a given legislative session.
Horizon	6-year rolling window — updated and re-adopted annually each spring.	One legislative session (annual) — reset and re-issued each year tied to the legislative calendar.
Who leads it	Planning Commission scores and ranks projects → City Manager → City Council adoption.	City Council sets priorities → City Manager → delivered to legislators and state agencies.
Content	Project descriptions, cost estimates, condition ratings, scoring, funding sources, and a 6-year capital schedule.	Ranked list of legislative asks — capital appropriations, grant programs, regulatory changes, and policy priorities.
Binding?	Yes — once adopted, guides the annual capital budget and grant applications.	No — an advocacy and communication tool; the legislature decides whether to act.
Relationship	The CIP feeds the legislative priority list. High-priority, unfunded CIP projects become the City's top legislative asks.	Legislative appropriations, when secured, fund projects already identified and prioritized in the CIP.

The CIP is the upstream planning document — projects must appear in the adopted CIP before they can be included on the Legislative Priority List.

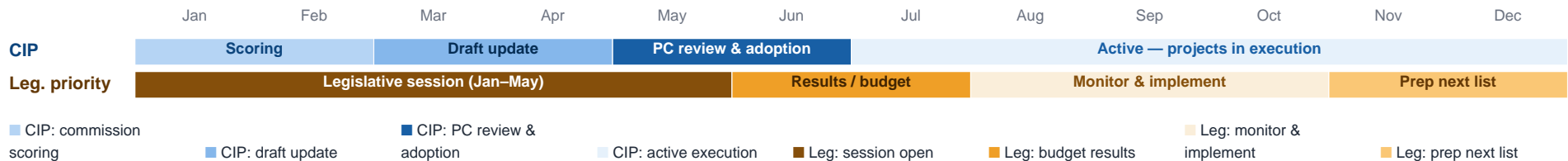
WHY THE CIP IS ESSENTIAL

Why the CIP matters for funding and grants

Grant eligibility	Demonstrates readiness	Avoids emergency spending
Most federal and state grant programs — SRF, CDBG, USDA, EDA, BRIC — require that projects appear in an adopted CIP before applications can be submitted. Without a CIP, the City cannot apply.	Funders want to see that a project has been planned, scoped, and prioritized by an official body. A scored CIP entry with cost estimates proves the City is ready to execute — not just requesting money.	A CIP surfaces failing infrastructure before it becomes a crisis. Planned projects are funded on far better terms — emergency repairs are the most expensive and least fundable category of capital work.
Aligns capital budgeting	Strengthens state requests	Supports multi-source funding
The adopted CIP directly informs the annual capital budget. Council appropriates funds for Year 1 projects with confidence they are scored, documented, and linked to a clear funding strategy.	When a project is on the CIP with a priority score and cost estimate, legislative appropriation requests carry far more weight — legislators and state agencies can point to an independent, documented need.	Large projects rarely have a single funding source. A CIP allows the City to layer grants, SRF loans, state appropriations, and local match systematically — showing each funder how all pieces fit together.

ANNUAL CYCLE COMPARISON

Why the timelines are different



Why the cycles are different: The CIP runs on the City's own planning calendar — scoring and adoption happen when staff and commissioners have capacity to do it thoroughly, feeding directly into the capital budget. The Legislative Priority List is driven entirely by the Alaska Legislature's calendar, which convenes in January and typically adjourns in May. The City's requests must be submitted and relationships built *before* session opens — meaning the priority list is finalized in the fall. **Projects must be on the CIP before they appear on the legislative list, making the CIP the essential upstream document.**