

Budgeting for GIS in FY25

Background

The Planning Board's FY25 budget is due to the Town Administrator at the end of November. As you know, I've been giving a lot of thought to the ongoing costs for the GIS program in Carlisle. Known costs have been budgeted for through FY26 (see my GIS budget doc); unknown costs are taking time to pin down, and largely depend on where the Town wants to go with the program.

Status of GIS Contract Work

CAI Technologies is on schedule with regards to building the Town's web-hosted AxisGIS site, and I anticipate it will be available to the public in December or January.

Adam Kurowski has made great progress on certain local data layers (culverts, cisterns) and others are taking a bit longer due to the status of the source data (septics, wells). His contract is through December 2024. He is also working through the survey feedback, and analyzing the data that we have available to us, in order to develop a Strategic Plan for the next 3-5 years. I anticipate it will be ready in draft form at some point in early 2024.

Proposal

The Town (Planning Board, ARPA, Select Board) recently made a large investment in the GIS Program. While I don't want to lose momentum, given that many things are still unknown and the budget is due soon, I think it makes sense to do two things: (1) Wait and (2) Plan.

- (1) Wait: I am not proposing adding a GIS line to the Planning Board budget for FY25. I think it makes sense to wait and let people familiarize with, explore, wonder, and dream about the possibilities opened up by the AxisGIS site – I will advertise it heavily once it's ready – and provide feedback about what more they want from it. In addition, once we have all the data in a coordinated geodatabase format, there are various analyses that can be done – some that may be able to be managed by current in-house hours/staff, and if-not, will help inform what we might consider regarding staffing or future consulting. In any case, I think people will be surprised about how much we already have – the State has great layers, our tax maps included a lot of layers, and the Open Space Plan and Master Plan mapping are excellent, etc. Adam is putting together a list of the layers we have so you can all get a sense of it.
- (2) Plan: As an alternative to a PB budget line, it might make sense to put a Capital placeholder on the Town Meeting warrant, for some amount of funding that could be used for one-time GIS-related costs over the next 3 years. This would give us time for the Strategic Plan to be finalized, so we're not rushing into anything, and put a finer point on things closer to the Town Meeting warrant deadline. A capital request like this could provide a funding source for any hardware and software needed by departments to support the program, for instance as we learn to update and maintain the data that has been developed.

To this end, Adam has prepared a draft Capital Budget for planning purposes. Some items in the list may already be covered or may fall under the Town's technology budget. The dollar amounts listed are well-researched but not quoted. Adam notes that the biggest variable is the NearMap cost, for which he has requested a demo and quote.

The table below proposes a capital budget of \$45,000 broken down into \$15,000 each year for 3 years. There would be no obligation or requirement to utilize the funds, but they would be there if the program warranted it. One thing I'm not entirely clear on is how the decision to utilize the funds would actually be made – I assume any purchases would need to be vetted by the Planning Board or some other entity?

→PB: If you like the direction we're going with this, let me know and we'll keep working on it.

Description	Vendor	Year 1	% Total	Year 2	% Total	Year 3	% Total	
Enhancements to AxisGIS Online GIS	CAI	\$3,750	25%	\$3,000	20%	\$2,250	15%	
GIS Laptop	Lenovo/Acer	\$1,500	10%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	
GPS Unit & Credits	Bad Elf LLC	\$525	3.5%	\$150	1%	\$150	1%	
Mobile Device for use with GPS & Cell Service	Samsung	\$600	4.0%	\$225	1.5%	\$225	1.5%	
Aerial Imagery subscription (3" resolution)	NearMap	\$6,000	40%	\$6,000	40%	\$6,000	40%	
Software: ArcGIS Desktop Licenses	ESRI	\$1,500	10%	\$1,500	10%	\$1,500	10%	
Software: ArcGIS Online Extra User Licenses	ESRI	\$750	5%	\$750	5%	\$750	5%	
Software: ArcGIS Online Credits	ESRI	\$300	2.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$300	2.0%	
	Estimated Total	\$14,925	100%	\$11,625	78%	\$11,175	75%	\$37,725
	Target Total	\$15,000		\$15,000		\$15,000		\$45,000
	NearMap							
	Sq Miles	15.5						
	Cost Per Sq Mile	300						
		4650						