

INNOVATIONS COMMITTEE

Scope and Method of Work

In its first meeting this committee decided to “hold back” on defining its work program until the Cost, Revenue, Capital, and Decision & Control Structure committees get far enough along to suggest the “big three or four” issues requiring an innovation audit. Thus, rather pursuing unsystematic scanning and research of municipal innovations, we have chosen to support the work of other committees with a problem-specific focus.

While waiting for final agreement on what big issues will form the core of our work, we will start reviewing for the Capital Structure committee what leading municipal governments are currently doing with respect to capital rationing and budgeting, since this critical management process appears, even at this early stage, to be a candidate for research by this committee. Newton’s capital investment process can most accurately be characterized as “incremental.” The Innovation committee will be looking over the near term for examples of cities roughly comparable to Newton that have adopted a more systematic, multi-year investment process, along with some pertinent details about the various processes employed.

As a second, start-up project, the Innovation committee will also begin researching how cities like Newton go about (a) developing a set of “agreed upon” goals and (b) using these explicit goals as decision guides by city officials in the allocation of financial and human resources.