

Planning for Capital Investments with Asset Management

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Often municipalities, especially small communities neglect capital improvements to water and wastewater infrastructure due to budgetary concerns. This makes it increasingly difficult to sustain assets in a condition necessary to provide the expected level of service.

While deferred maintenance or replacement of critical infrastructure has a short-term benefit to the bottom line for the community, it increases long term costs through catastrophic failures, increased overtime for staff, and shortening the life expectancy for these assets. Catastrophic failures lead to sewer spills in wastewater system and boil water notices for drinking water systems putting public health at risk and increased overtime and shortened asset life adds unnecessary hidden cost for the utilities.

Asset management planning can help avoid these pitfalls for the communities. Buy in by all stakeholders is required to develop an effective asset management plan. Asset management is a tool water and wastewater utilities can use to make sure that planned maintenance can be conducted and capital assets (pumps, motors, pipes, etc.) can be repaired, replaced, or upgraded on time.

Developing an asset management plan for these communities can be uncomfortable and controversial. This practicum is to facilitate a kickoff meeting to coordinate the development of an asset management plan for a small community and present the findings at a future public meeting.