

**Boring Until It's Broken:  
Engaging the Public in Infrastructure  
and Asset Management**

Participant Workbook

This initiative is offered through the Municipal Asset Management Program, which is delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and funded by the Government of Canada.

[fcm.ca/assetmanagementprogram](http://fcm.ca/assetmanagementprogram)



### About FCM

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The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is the national voice of municipal government. In leading the municipal movement, FCM works to align federal and local priorities, recognizing that strong hometowns make for a strong Canada.



### About AUMA

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Founded in 1905, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) represents 269 urban municipalities including cities, towns, villages, summer villages, and specialized municipalities. AUMA works with federal and provincial governments and business and community stakeholders on a broad range of issues to strengthen the economic, social, cultural, and environmental vitality of its member municipalities.



### About RMA

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Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) is an independent association representing Alberta's 69 counties and municipal districts. Since 1909, RMA has helped rural municipalities achieve strong, effective local government.

# Table of Contents

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<b>WELCOME</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>USING THE WORKBOOK</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: ASSET MANAGEMENT REFRESH</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>MODULE 1 – ARTICULATE WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC IN ASSET MANAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: ARTICULATE WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC IN ASSET MANAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: IDENTIFY COUNCIL’S ROLE IN COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>MODULE 2 – IDENTIFY WHO SHOULD BE ENGAGED AND WHAT THE MESSAGES SHOULD BE</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE AND KEY MESSAGES AND QUESTIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>MODULE 3 – IDENTIFY HOW TO ENGAGE</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: IDENTIFY GOOD PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING WITH CONSTITUENTS</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: INCORPORATING COMMUNITY INPUT</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>LEARNING GOAL: MONITOR FOR SUCCESS</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>YOU’VE MADE IT!</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>GLOSSARY</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX – SERVICE AREA INFOGRAPHICS, TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY</b> .....	<b>27</b>



# Welcome

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Welcome to *Boring Until It's Broken: Engaging the Public in Infrastructure and Asset Management!*

This course is part of a series of half-day courses that help you go deeper into different aspects of asset management. This course has been designed to equip you with a strong understanding of how to engage the public in the relevant discussions about asset management.

## Asset Management and Elected Officials

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Through this course, you will be introduced to the ins and outs of asset management, specifically how it relates to your role as an elected official. A few important points to get us started:

**Asset management** is the process of making decisions about using and caring for infrastructure to deliver services in a way that considers current and future needs, manages risks and opportunities, and makes the best use of resources.

**Elected officials** support asset management in their communities by being knowledgeable about good practice, supporting staff initiatives, making resources for asset management available, and asking the right questions when making decisions about infrastructure. However, there has been little training provided to elected officials to help them navigate their role in asset management.

**This course** was designed to provide you, as elected officials, with a foundation in engaging the public in asset management so that you know how to approach it in your day-to-day work as council.

## Using the Workbook

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### Learning Goal

Specific learning outcome to be achieved.



### Did You Know?

Interesting facts and insights on asset management.



### Activity

Individual or group exercises designed to put learning into practice.



### Resources

Additional reference materials and tools related to the topic. Web addresses for the resources can be found at the back of the workbook.



### Glossary

Definitions of words and phrases used in the course material.



## LEARNING GOAL: **Asset Management Refresh**

Some of you may have taken the Asset Management for Elected Officials course and are already familiar with asset management. For others, this may be new. To make sure we're all on the same page, let's review the key concepts of asset management.

A major component of municipal service delivery is taking care of the assets that make those services possible. An **asset**, also known as a tangible capital asset (TCA), is a physical component of a system that enables a service, or services, to be provided. For example, pipes are the assets that deliver water service to homes, roads and traffic lights are the assets that make transportation possible, and recreation centres are assets that allow recreation services to be provided to the community.

Asset management is ultimately about **sustainable service delivery**: the process of ensuring that municipal services are delivered in a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible way, and that decisions today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own service needs.

Municipalities have been managing assets for a long time. However, asset management is more than just managing assets.

**Asset management** is a systematic, organized, and integrated approach.

**“The process of making decisions about the use and care of infrastructure to deliver services in a way that considers current and future needs, manages risks and opportunities and makes the best use of resources”**

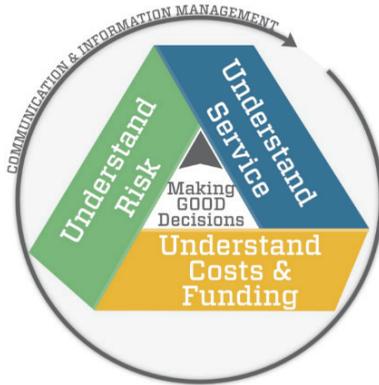
*(Building Community Resilience Through Asset Management: A Handbook & Toolkit for Alberta Municipalities).*

The key emphasis here is “making decisions”. Asset management is about using systems and processes to balance cost, risk, and level of service to make informed decisions that make sense for your community in the long run. Asset management is not just for large communities. All municipalities make decisions about their assets. The systems and processes don't need to be extensively detailed or expensive; you can start where you are. Your municipality likely already uses processes for things like planning and budgeting. Asset management is about updating those processes to ensure they systematically consider the right kind of information and take a long-term perspective to delivering services.

### **Asset Management and Decision-Making**

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It is the role of council to make decisions and set direction. Making decisions in a municipal context requires thinking about trade-offs between service, risk, and cost. While it is not the role of councillors to prepare information about service, risk, and cost trade-offs, it is their role to incorporate an **asset management lens** and request information from staff to support sound decision-making.



Source: *Building Community Resilience Through Asset Management: A Handbook and Toolkit for Alberta Municipalities*

The table below identifies some of the main considerations in service, risk, and cost. We will explore some of these in more depth later in the course.

Service	Risk	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of services</li> <li>• Who benefits or doesn't benefit from a particular service</li> <li>• The current and desired level of service</li> <li>• Regulatory requirements</li> <li>• Service demands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events that would have an undesirable impact on services</li> <li>• Asset risk describes the risk of an asset failing to perform the way you need it to deliver a service</li> <li>• Strategic risk describes a change that would affect your ability to achieve municipal objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement and capital costs</li> <li>• Operating and maintenance costs</li> <li>• Revenue sources</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul>



## Glossary

**Asset management** | A process of making decisions about how infrastructure is used and cared for in a way that manages current and future needs, considers risks and opportunities, and makes the best use of resources.

**Asset management lens** | Integrating asset management practices into decision-making. Specifically, thinking about what information is available, what additional information is needed, what trade-offs are being made, and what are the community's long-term goals and needs.

**Asset risk** | The risk of an asset failing to perform the way you need it to (e.g., a pipe bursts).

**Assets** | Also known as a tangible capital asset (TCA), a physical component of a system that enables a service, or services, to be provided.

**Risk** | The relationship between the likelihood of an event happening and the consequences of that event.

**Strategic risk** | The risk of a change occurring that impedes your ability to achieve your overarching strategic goals (e.g., hot, dry conditions put pressure on your ability to provide water service).

**Sustainable service delivery** | Ensuring that municipal services are delivered in a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible way, and that decisions today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own service needs.

# Module 1 – Articulate Why It Is Important to Engage the Public in Asset Management

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**After completing this module, participants will achieve the following learning goals:**

- Articulate why it is important to engage the public in asset management
- Identify council's role in communication and engagement

## **LEARNING GOAL: Articulate Why It Is Important to Engage the Public in Asset Management**

Most often, infrastructure assets are invisible to the public until something goes wrong. You don't notice the quality or condition of your roads until there is a pothole, or how much water you use until there are water restrictions in place. The public does hear about infrastructure, but usually only when there's a problem with it. There's an opportunity to communicate with and engage the public throughout the process of asset management, so that constituents develop a deeper understanding of services and what it takes to deliver them.



### **Did You Know?**

- 60% of Canada's core public infrastructure is owned and maintained by municipal governments.
- One-third of municipal infrastructure is in fair, poor, or very poor condition.
- Canadian Infrastructure Report Card found that "All communities, particularly smaller municipalities, would benefit from increased asset management capacity."



## **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT?**

When we refer to **communication** in the context of asset management, the emphasis is on sharing information with the public. **Engagement** refers to sharing information and asking questions of, or getting input from, the public to inform a direction or decision.

To be clear, this is not about trying to engage the public in conversations about the full process of asset management. It is about engaging and communicating about relevant topics that will impact the services the public receives and what they pay to receive these services. Just as council and staff each have unique roles to play in the ongoing process of asset management, so does the public. The goal of communication and engagement regarding asset management is to ensure that the public is sufficiently informed to be able to fulfill their role of receiving services, paying taxes and user fees, and providing feedback to the municipality about their priorities. Engagement ultimately supports council in fulfilling their role in asset management, which requires making decisions that steward sustainable service delivery and representing the priorities of constituents.

## Purpose of Engaging the Public

1. **To build public awareness about assets and provide relevant information on asset management.** The public doesn't need to know the ins and outs of asset management, but it's important that there is a general appreciation among the public of the need for the municipality to responsibly prepare for the future. For example, a municipality may build its capital reserves by putting away some funds from the budget each year. These funds will be allocated for renewal of assets in the future. It is important for the public to understand why that is a fair and necessary approach. For example, after a municipality builds a new recreation facility, they may begin allocating a little bit of funding each year to a capital reserve that can be used to renovate the facility when required. The public needs to understand that building a new facility is not the end of capital expenditures on that facility; it's really only the beginning.
2. **To be transparent about investment decisions and levels of service.** Municipalities are often faced with decisions that are financially significant and will impact levels of service. For example, when upgrading a wastewater treatment plant to meet changing regulations, a municipality may make the decision to upgrade plant capacity at the same time as treatment technology. Or when resurfacing roads, a municipality may need to prioritize roads according to risk and available funds. Some people will benefit from the repairs (and higher level of service) sooner than others. It is important that the municipality communicate the reasons these decisions were made, and how they will impact the level of service constituents can expect – today and into the future.
3. **To understand and consider public expectations and input in setting priorities and levels of service, as well as understand willingness-to-pay.** It is important to give people an opportunity to influence a decision that will impact them, to the extent possible. People will always have opinions and expectations about the level of service they receive. These people are ultimately the recipients of the service – and service delivery is the core purpose of assets - so it is important that their input is considered. However, it isn't helpful to just know what someone wants – it's important to also know what they're willing to pay for it. Given the choice, most of us would choose a five-star hotel; however, when we have to pay the price tag, we will likely adjust our expectations.



### Did You Know?

As of July 23, 2018, municipalities are required to have a public participation policy under Section 216.1 of the Municipal Government Act. These requirements came into effect in October of 2017, and municipalities have 270 days to comply by passing their policy. As stated in ***Public Participation Policies and Public Notification: A Guide for Municipalities***, "This policy must identify how municipalities will approach public participation and engagement. The policy must also identify the types or categories of approaches the municipality will use to engage municipal stakeholders, and the types or categories of circumstances in which the municipality will engage municipal stakeholders."

The Guide for Municipalities was developed by the Alberta Government, AUMA, and RMA.

Benefits of Engaging the Public

- Minimizes surprises to constituents
- Demonstrates transparent decision-making
- Increases public trust that the municipality is acting as a responsible steward of services and the community
- Educates and engages the public on how services are delivered and what trade-offs are considered
- Informs realistic expectations of what service levels can be delivered at what cost
- Enables constituents to communicate their priorities and willingness-to-pay

Glossary

**Communications** | The process of keeping constituents and stakeholders informed about decisions and activities that are relevant to them.

**Engagement** | The process of interacting with constituents and stakeholders to build awareness and communicate decisions and activities that are relevant to them, and also to collect and incorporate their feedback into those decisions and activities.



Activity

Consider the following questions. Write some key words on sticky notes to put on the wall – one word or phrase per sticky note (you can use multiple sticky notes). You can use the space below to take notes.

**What do you think is the public’s view on asset management?**

Empty rectangular box for taking notes.



**What do constituents in your community think about infrastructure?**

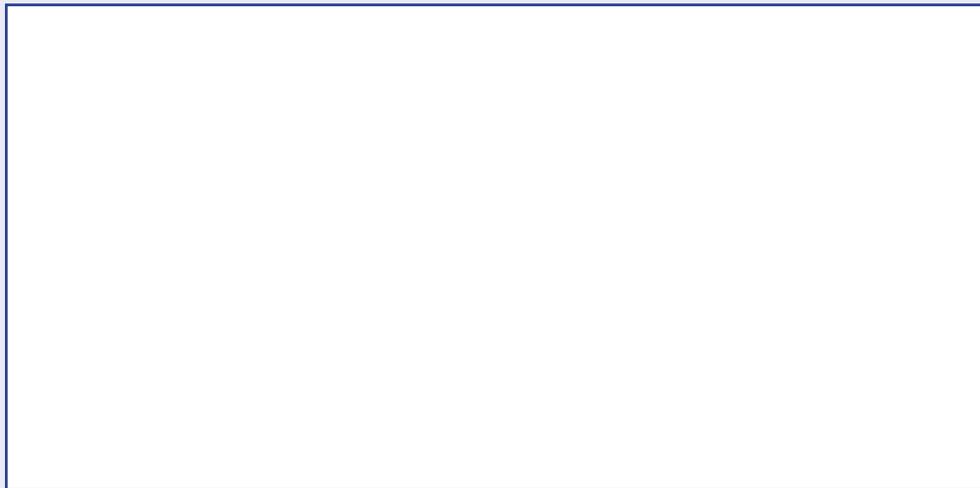


In small groups, conduct a thought experiment. Put yourselves in the shoes of a few “typical” constituents in your community. Think about what they might know about infrastructure and service delivery, and discuss common perspectives of infrastructure and service delivery.

**What are people thinking about?**



**What is the public’s role in asset management and sustainable service delivery?**



## LEARNING GOAL: Identify Council's Role in Communication and Engagement



While the public may not notice infrastructure until something goes wrong, when they do notice, council members are often the first to hear complaints. Councillors play an important role in communicating the work of municipal government to constituents, as well as understanding issues facing the public and public expectations.

Council members are continuously engaged in conversations with constituents. These conversations are each an opportunity to include messages related to asset management and sustainable service delivery. It is also important to include similar messages during standalone events and specific public consultation sessions about other municipal issues.

Council has an important role in supporting communication and engagement with the public in many ways:

1. Talking to constituents about how decisions are made and how the municipality is working to be responsible and prudent stewards of services over the long-term through asset management.
2. Reporting to staff any information on service issues that are identified during interactions with constituents. This may take the form of formal engagement during public meetings, or informally through phone calls, visits, or letters from constituents.
3. Enabling staff to improve communication and engagement through appropriate financial and human resources, and through skill building and training. This will also allow staff to support council to be more effective in their role in communication and engagement.
4. Participating in public consultation processes to gain input that can help council make better informed decisions on such topics as budgeting, major projects, and community vision and plans. The public should be consulted in areas where the municipality is able and willing to incorporate input. For example, public consultation would be helpful to inform the opening hours of a recreation facility or the amenities in a park. The public may not need to be consulted for technical or regulatory decisions, such as the number of hydrants in a new subdivision.

Being able to participate in these conversations and fulfill the role of an elected official in communicating and engaging with the public about sustainable service delivery and asset management does not require in-depth understanding of the asset management systems and processes. However, it does require that elected officials understand, and are engaged in, the approach to setting priorities and making decisions in a way that considers current and long-term risks, costs, and service objectives.

Staff will play an important role in providing the right kind of information and tools that elected officials need to be able to fulfill their role in communication and engagement. For example, staff would be responsible for developing the communication and engagement plan, developing information to share publicly and arranging opportunities for effectively and gathering community input.



### Activity

In pairs, work through the following questions:

**How has your community communicated with, or engaged, members of the public in relation to infrastructure or service delivery issues? What were the benefits and challenges you experienced?**

**In these examples, what was the role of council members and what was the role of staff?**

**What do you see as your role in communicating with and engaging the public in infrastructure and service delivery issues?**



**What do you see as staff's role in communicating with and engaging the public in infrastructure and service delivery issues?**



# Module 2 – Identify Who Should Be Engaged and What the Messages Should Be

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**After completing this module, participants will achieve the following learning goals:**

- Identify the audience, key messages and questions for engagement



## **LEARNING GOAL: Identify the Audience and Key Messages and Questions for Engagement**

Elected officials are typically well practiced at communicating with, and engaging, the public – it’s a critical part of the job. The purpose of this section is to review some general best practices for communication and engagement, as well as some specific considerations for asset management and service delivery.

### **TARGETED COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

There are several instances where a municipality may have specific objectives for communication and engagement with the public. Staff are responsible for preparing for, and conducting public engagement, but council has an important role in advising the direction of the engagement, and as decision-makers, confirming the role of stakeholders and stakeholder input in the decision-making process. It is important that the role of stakeholder input is understood before engagement is completed, in order to manage expectations with stakeholders. Elected officials in some communities may even participate in communication and engagement initiatives.

Before beginning any communication or engagement with the public, it is important to clearly understand the following:

**1. Your objectives for communicating or engaging.** Some example objectives related to asset management and service delivery are:

- Provide information about an important infrastructure upgrade
- Obtain input on discretionary items in the budget
- Inform people about the costs of providing service
- Obtain input on levels of service and willingness to pay

It is important that you are clear on whether you are simply communicating a message or you are asking for input. If you are asking for input, you also need to be clear - and communicate - how that input will be considered in the decision-making process. Do not ask for input on something if the municipality is not willing or able to use and respond to the input. This doesn’t mean that the municipality needs to do exactly what the public is asking for – there are other factors to consider (such as financial, implementation abilities, managing risk, etc.). People are generally satisfied with the process, even if the decision isn’t what they originally wanted, if they understand how their input was considered and the rationale for the decision. In short, people want to know they have been heard. It erodes trust if people take the time to provide input and the municipality is not willing or able to use it.

Reporting back to the community on what was heard and how their input was considered in the decision-making process is a critical component in creating trust for the engagement process and, ultimately, encouraging community members to engage the next time.

**2. Your audience.** Different audiences will care about different things and will engage in different ways. Knowing your audience will help you to identify your key messages and which methods of engagement will be the most effective for them. Some example audiences in the context of asset management and service delivery are:

- Specific neighbourhoods impacted by an infrastructure upgrade
- Users of a community facility, to get feedback on the facility
- Non-users of a community facility, to understand why they don't use it
- Industrial customers who will be impacted by a water rate increase
- Special interest groups who have specific uses for parks and park amenities

**3. Your methods of engagement.** How will you be able to best achieve your objectives? How can you best reach your audiences and gain their perspectives? What is practical and cost-effective for your municipality to do? What will get people's attention? The possibilities for communicating and gathering input from audiences are endless. Some techniques often used for topics related to infrastructure and service delivery are:

- Mail outs (often included with tax or utility bills)
- Posters/ public advertising campaigns
- Roadside message boards
- Open houses or pop up displays (held in places where you know your audience will gather for example, a neighborhood centre or school, a farmers market or the mall)
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Coffee shop chats
- Social media

A quick word about social media. While not all your audiences will be "tweeters" or want to be your Facebook friend, many will. Social media can be a very effective way to generate excitement about an upcoming initiative, get people thinking about a big question and even invite community members to an engagement activity and keep track of RSVPs. Many municipalities have social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others -- and they use them effectively. Some advantages of using social media are that they allow you to disseminate information quickly (even report on an engagement activity "as it happens"), you know who you are reaching (you have a list of followers), and even though you can't put a lot of information in a post, you can link users to additional online information or engagement opportunities like surveys.

A word of caution; social media is, by its very nature, interactive -- meaning users expect it to allow two-way information. If municipalities use their social media account, say Facebook, only for posting information but they don't allow public comment, they may find they won't get many followers. On the other hand, when public dialogue is encouraged -- yes even negative comments -- municipalities have a unique opportunity to immediately see what people are thinking and proactively address misinformation or criticisms in a way that builds trust. A competent social media administrator will ensure inappropriate comments never get airtime on your accounts, but that your municipality's "public face" is viewed as engaging, open and trustworthy.

Engagement with the public about asset management and service delivery doesn't have to be standalone engagement. Look for opportunities to link with other engagement and communication efforts -- asset management on its own doesn't mean much to constituents. What does matter is the role of asset management in providing services, supporting good governance and decision-making, and keeping costs manageable.

## GENERAL ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

In addition to targeted communication and engagement initiatives, there are many opportunities for municipalities and elected officials to include messaging about asset management and service delivery. For example, a municipality can incorporate key messages about asset management in consultation about a community vision or plan or annual budgeting engagement.

Using sustained and consistent messaging, conveyed using plain language and graphics/visuals, will be the most effective in building general awareness of, for example, the costs of delivering services, the importance of assets in service delivery, the need to manage assets, and realistic expectations of levels of service given constituents' willingness-to-pay. This messaging can and should be built into every reasonable opportunity to engage with the public. You might communicate and engage through formal events or through more casual coffee shop type discussions. Whatever the forum, there are some common key messages that should be conveyed regarding asset management:

- Infrastructure exists to deliver services
- These services need to meet the needs of today and consider the needs of the future
- Expectations for levels of service need to be considered in the context of willingness-to-pay
- Asset management is a process that the municipality uses to responsibly manage risks and deliver services while containing costs
- Asset management is critical to the long-term viability of the community
- Because the municipality is practicing asset management, the public can be confident that the services provided by the municipality are reliable and stable



### Resources

Service Area Infographics, Township of Langley (Appendix of this workbook)

Public Participation Policies and Public Notification: A Guide for Municipalities, Alberta Government, AUMA and RMA

Citizen Engagement Toolkit, AUMA and RMA

Social Media Resource Guide, AUMA and RMA

Public Input Toolkit, Government of Alberta



### Activity

In small groups, share an example of communication and engagement in your community (related to infrastructure or service delivery) and discuss the following questions.

#### What were the objectives?

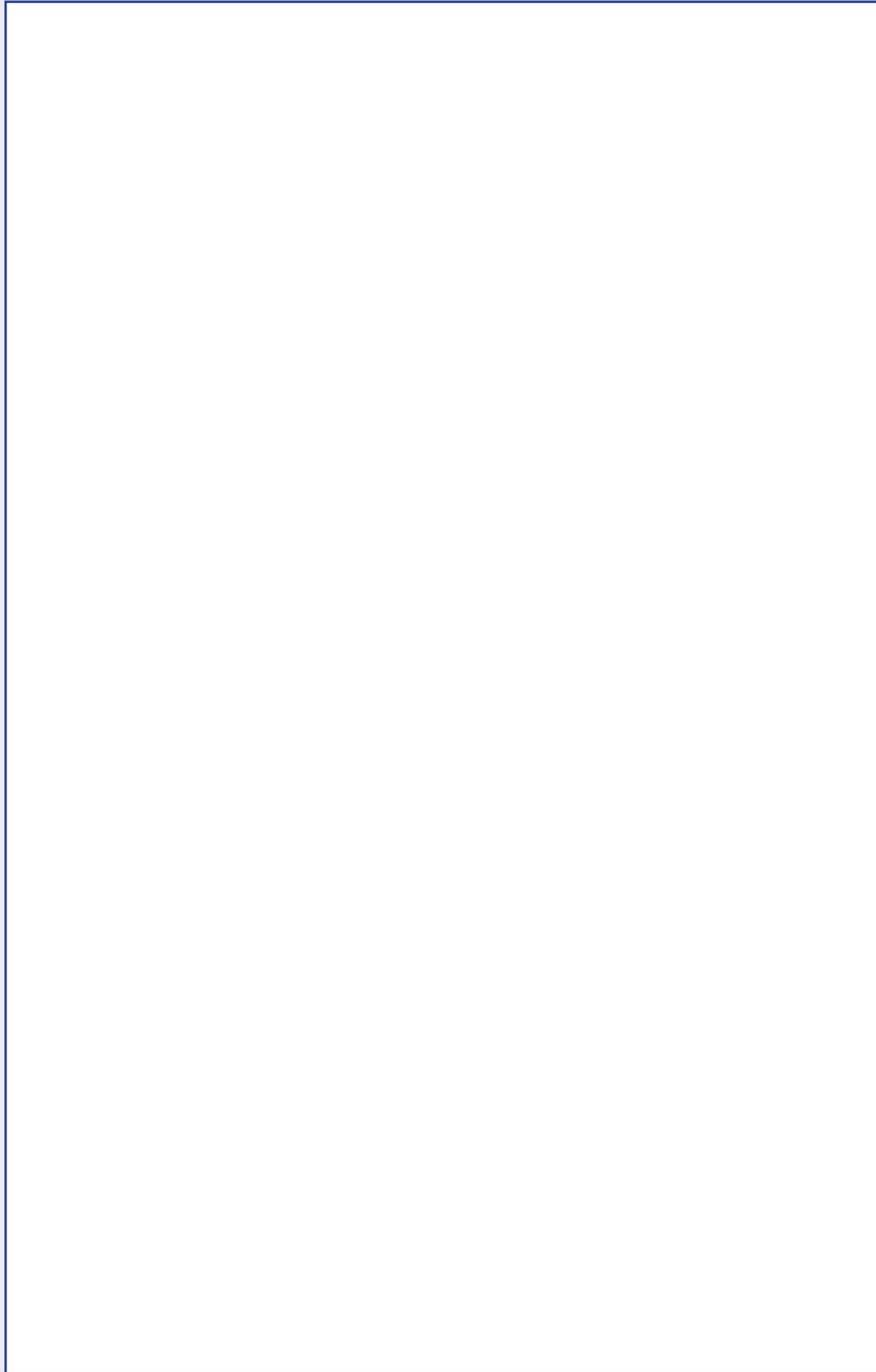
#### Who were the audiences?

#### What were the methods used?

#### How successful was it?

As a group, brainstorm some ways you could incorporate general messaging about service delivery and asset management into your communications.

**What benefits might you see in your community from this kind of communication and engagement?**



## Module 3 – Identify How to Engage

**After completing this module, participants will be able to**

- Identify good practices for engaging with constituents
- Monitor for success

### **LEARNING GOAL: Identify Good Practices for Engaging with Constituents**

When communicating and engaging with the public, there are some practices to consider that can help you to be more effective and achieve your objectives. As discussed previously, it is the responsibility of staff to develop and implement methods for public engagement, but council is ultimately elected to represent constituents, so it is important that council provide direction on communication and engagement. It is also critical that council is informed of the results so they can be considered in decision-making.

Below are some practices for effective communication and engagement. These practices can be used both in targeted engagement events, as well as in general communications (some can even be used in informal conversations).

- **Keep it interesting** – Relate asset management to things people care about: their experience with services, having their voice heard, and minimizing taxes and fees.
- **Tell a story** – Connect asset management and service delivery to broader community goals.
- **Brand it** – Branding helps make the message identifiable.
- **Make it fun** – There are many tools and strategies out there to help you collect information while creating a fun, interactive experience for participants.
- **Leverage current events** – Connect asset management to local and national news and highlight how asset management plays a role in supporting the community's long-term goals.
- **Find ambassadors** – Special interest groups, community leaders, or others who are passionate about preserving the community. These are people who are credible and who can help you spread the message.
- **Collaborate** – Work with other municipalities, provincial associations and communities of practice, or other levels of government to develop broad communication campaigns to convey important concepts. These may apply at a regional or even provincial level. Several municipalities have experience or have developed tools for communication related to asset management, find out what is available for you to leverage.

As mentioned previously, communication and engagement about sustainable service delivery does not have to be a standalone event; important messages can be woven into everyday conversations.



### **Did You Know?**

- The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Canada is an association of professionals working in public participation. The organization offers training and best practices on community engagement that is used by local governments across Canada.
- Communities of practice, such as Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta (IAMA), are great forums to find resources on communication and engagement for asset management, and to learn strategies from peer municipalities.





### Resources

IAP2 Canada

IAMA



### Activity

Consider the engagement examples shared by your facilitator.

**What did these campaigns do to connect asset management with constituent interests?**

## LEARNING GOAL: Incorporating Community Input



We know why community input is important and what role council plays in communications and engagement. Typically, when input is being sought from the public, it is to understand priorities, desired levels of service, and willingness to pay. We've also discussed who should be engaged and how to engage them. The next step is incorporating community input into the levels of service reflected in plans, policies, and decisions. Communications and engagement methods are diverse, and so are the ways that community input is incorporated into asset management practices.

### COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Council priorities are set based on a number of different factors. The interests and needs of constituents are clearly an important part of priority-setting. Councillors develop their understanding of community needs through a variety of ways—from informal conversations during community events, calls and visits from constituents, reports from staff, and formal community engagement processes. Feedback from these different inputs helps shape the understanding council—and also staff—have of what is important to their community.

### PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Municipalities use a wide range of plans and strategies in their operations – some are long-term and high-level, while others are detailed and specific in scope. Plans and strategies are often where municipalities will identify the levels of service they will provide; and these levels of service ultimately drive costs of service provision. Plans and strategies should be integrated with a financial plan that identifies how the municipality will pay for the delivery of these levels of service. This relates back to the willingness to pay of those who use the service. Formal engagement opportunities—such as public meetings, open houses, and surveys—are often conducted during the development of plans and strategies to understand priorities, the desired level of service, and the corresponding willingness to pay. Feedback collected during periods of formal engagement is usually captured and summarized in publicly available documents. The feedback may be used to identify community priorities, needs, or issues. These are incorporated into plans and strategies along with consideration of other data sources, regulatory requirements, staff knowledge, financial realities, and council priorities, among other factors.

Some examples of how public input can be used in developing plans and strategies are:

- Prioritizing discretionary items in the municipal capital plan and budget
- Identifying desired amenities within a neighbourhood park
- Developing a long-term recreation strategy
- Deciding to extend piped water service to residents currently on individual well service

### OPERATIONS

Community input that is incorporated into plans and strategies may result in changes to day-to-day operations of services. However, this is not the only way that community feedback impacts operations. Regular feedback from constituents, including formal complaints, is part of the monitoring process of ensuring that service delivery is working and meeting needs. In some cases, the municipality may only find out something isn't working when they receive a complaint from a constituent; for example, when a pothole appears or a storm causes infrastructure damage. In this way, community input is a regular part of the process of operations. Some complaints can be responded to immediately or easily without significantly impacting overall plans, budgets, or allocation of staff resources. Other complaints may not be so easy to respond to and will need to be considered as part of more significant budgeting or planning processes. Staff will need to monitor and assess feedback received and determine where and how to incorporate the feedback. For example, a few complaints that public washroom facilities are untidy on a specific day can be dealt with quickly by staff. However, ongoing complaints that public washrooms are untidy may signal that additional staff resources are needed to increase the frequency of washroom cleaning.

Communications and engagement are not one-time events. They are part of an ongoing process and can take the form of both formal and informal activities. When making major decisions or planning for the long term, formal methods are necessary to ensure transparency and communicate to constituents that there is a forum for their feedback. However, informal feedback can be useful and can provide checkpoints on service delivery on a regular basis. In all cases, constituent feedback on services and infrastructure is balanced with professional judgement, financial realities of the community, and other priorities. Communicating back to the public about what was heard from them, how their input was considered, and the final decision is critical to ensuring transparency and building trust between the municipal government and the public.



### **LEARNING GOAL: Monitor for Success**

Effective communication and engagement is not one-size-fits-all. A municipality can't just take a successful approach from one location and apply it directly in another. There are common good practices that can be followed, but the actual communication and engagement needs to be tailored for the community and the local context. Monitoring success is important because it can help a municipality to identify what has been working and what hasn't and adapt the approach accordingly.

Often, communication and engagement efforts are measured by their activities and immediate outputs, for example:

- Number of people attending an open house
- Number of mail-out fliers delivered
- Number of views on a web-site
- Number of survey responses

These types of measures may indicate how wide the message is being spread, but they aren't helpful in understanding how well the messages are getting across or the impact that the messages are having. The ultimate impacts, or outcomes of the communication and engagement efforts are what matters. These outcomes can be more difficult to measure, as sometimes they will take time (and lots of sustained effort) to achieve.



#### **Activity**

This will be a facilitated group discussion.

#### **How do you know if you're successful in getting your message across?**



### Activity

Imagine an “ideal community”, where the public is well informed, and the municipality is able to effectively obtain public input on important and relevant matters.

**What are some characteristics of this community?**

**What are the main differences between this “ideal community” and your community?**

**What are some key messages that would be helpful for the public in your community to understand?**

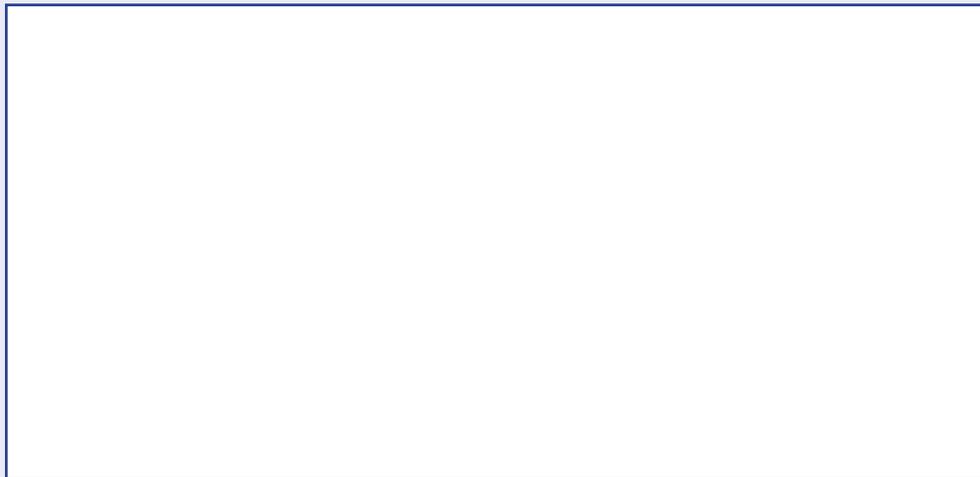
**Where would more effective public input be helpful in your community?**



**What ideas do you have for what could be tried in your community? What would be the roles of elected officials and staff in implementing these ideas?**



**How would you know if it was working?**



## You've Made It!

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Here you are at the end of the course. Thank you for joining us for what was hopefully a day of learning, good conversation, and shared insight among you and your colleagues. Remember, today is just a start. Together, we've laid the foundation, but we hope that you'll continue to learn, ask questions, and participate in other opportunities to expand your knowledge of asset management. Throughout this book, and at the back, you can find the glossary and a list of resources if you ever need to reference something you learned in this course.

Municipalities across Canada are facing infrastructure deficits that will impact, or are already impacting, service delivery. Canadian weather, already harsh in many parts of the country, is being impacted by climate change which will impact many aspects of service delivery. Apart from major issues and events, constituents in your communities experience your services and infrastructure on a daily basis. Small things out of the ordinary can send them asking questions of staff and elected officials. All of these things are why communications and engagement are so important to service delivery and asset management.

### ASSET MANAGEMENT MINDSET

If you got anything out of today, we hope that it was an understanding of how an asset management mindset can support you in your role as an elected official and steward of community well-being. If you're ever stuck, start by asking yourself some questions:

- Do we have the information we need to make a decision?
- Have trade-offs between cost, risk, and service been considered?
- Are we focusing on service delivery?
- What are the long-term implications?
- Have all the relevant disciplines been properly engaged in this decision (e.g., planning, engineering, public works, finance, etc.)?
- Are we thinking about both short- and long-term needs?

## CONTINUING TO LEARN

This course is part of a series of courses for elected officials offered by AUMA and RMA. This series of courses goes deeper into specific topics related to asset management and include the following five courses:

- *Boring Until It's Broken: Engaging the Public in Infrastructure Asset Management*
- *Risk: How Asset Management Can Help*
- *"I want a Five-Star Experience for a Two-Star Price: Setting and Communicating Levels of Service*
- *It's Got Teeth but Doesn't Bite: Developing and Implementing an Effective Asset Management Policy*
- *Weathering the Storm: Asset Management and Climate Change*

Please contact AUMA or RMA to find out more about these courses.

## Glossary

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**Asset management** | A process of making decisions about how infrastructure is used and cared for in a way that manages current and future needs, considers risks and opportunities, and makes the best use of resources.

**Asset management lens** | Integrating asset management practices into decision-making. Specifically, thinking about what information is available, what additional information is needed, what trade-offs are being made, and what are the community's long-term goals and needs.

**Asset risk** | The risk of an asset failing to perform the way you need it to (e.g., a pipe bursts).

**Assets** | Also known as a tangible capital asset (TCA), a physical component of a system that enables a service, or services, to be provided.

**Communications** | The process of keeping constituents and stakeholders informed about decisions and activities that are relevant to them.

**Engagement** | The process of interacting with constituents and stakeholders to both educate and communicate decisions and activities that are relevant to them, but also to collect their feedback on those decisions and activities, and incorporate their priorities and preferences, as benefits the whole community, in decision-making.

**Risk** | The relationship between the likelihood of an event happening and the consequences of that event.

**Strategic risk** | The risk of a change occurring that impedes your ability to achieve your overarching strategic goals (e.g., hot, dry conditions put pressure on your ability to provide water service).

**Sustainable service delivery** | Ensuring that municipal services are delivered in a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible way, and that decisions today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own service needs.

# Resources

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Township of Langley Infographics ([Appendix of this workbook](#))

Public Participation Policies and Public Notification: A Guide for Municipalities, AUMA and AAMDC

[https://auma.ca/sites/default/files/public\\_participation\\_and\\_public\\_notification\\_guide\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://auma.ca/sites/default/files/public_participation_and_public_notification_guide_-_final.pdf)

Citizen Engagement Toolkit, AUMA and AAMDC

<http://aamdc.com/images/Documents/Final%20AUMA%20AAMDC%20CET%202015.pdf>

Social Media Resource Guide, AUMA and AAMDC

<http://www.aamdc.com/attachments/article/793/Final%20AUMA%20AAMDC%20Social%20Media%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

Public Input Toolkit, Municipal Affairs

[http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/MDRS/AMA\\_Public\\_Input\\_Toolkit\\_Sept2014.pdf](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/MDRS/AMA_Public_Input_Toolkit_Sept2014.pdf)

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

<http://iap2canada.ca/>

Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta (IAMA)

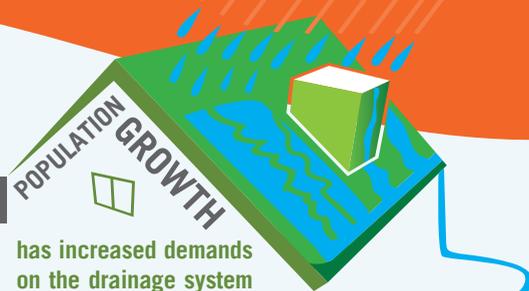
<http://assetmanagementab.ca/>

# Appendix – Service Area Infographics, Township of Langley



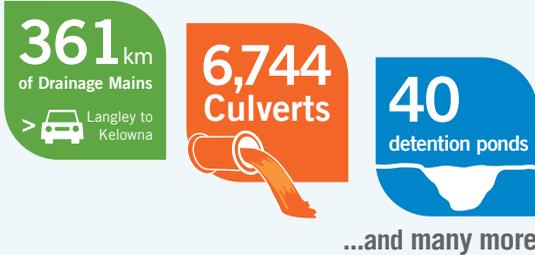
## DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Township of Langley takes pride in providing and maintaining drainage infrastructure for our community. Drainage services and infrastructure are funded through taxes collected by the Township from residents and businesses.



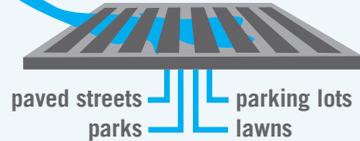
has increased demands on the drainage system and more funding is required to maintain, renew, and replace the ageing infrastructure

### THE TOWNSHIP'S DRAINAGE SYSTEM has grown to include:



1,560mm of rain fell on the Township in 2012

The Township's Drainage systems conveyed this fallen rainwater, called stormwater from our



and other areas to prevent pooling and flooding at our homes, businesses and places of recreation.

**\$390 million** current value of the drainage infrastructure



**Additional estimated annual replacement funding required.** In addition to existing funding levels.

### CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE



An increase in infrastructure funding is required to continue providing safe and effective drainage infrastructure, now and into the future.



Est. 1873

# SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Township of Langley takes pride in providing and maintaining Sewer infrastructure for our community. Sewer services and infrastructure are funded through the rates collected by the Township from residents and businesses.



**POPULATION GROWTH** means that the amount of sewage has increased placing additional demands on our sewer infrastructure.

**THE TOWNSHIP'S SEWER SYSTEM** has grown to include:

**15,000 properties** are making use of the Township's Sewer system

**28 million liters/day** Wastewater handled

= **10.2 billion liters / year**

= filling up **4x** BC place

**335 km** of Mains  
> Langley to Kamloops

**4,282 Manholes**

**25 Lift Stations**  
2,036 Hp total  
**x2000**

...and many more

**\$190 million** current value of the sewer infrastructure

## CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE



**0.5 million**

**Additional estimated annual replacement funding required.** In addition to existing funding levels.

An increase in infrastructure funding is required to continue providing safe and effective sewer infrastructure now, and into the future.



# DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Township of Langley takes pride in providing a reliable, efficient, and safe drinking water system for our community. Water services and infrastructure are funded through the rates collected by the Township from residents and businesses.



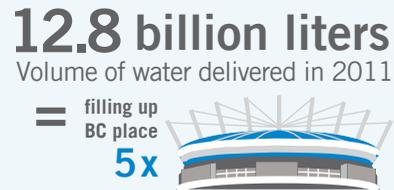
has increased demands on the drinking water system and more funding is required to maintain, renew, and replace the ageing infrastructure

over **80%** of residents rely on the Township's water infrastructure

**THE TOWNSHIP'S WATER SYSTEM** has grown to include:



...and many more



**\$340 million** current value of the drinking water infrastructure

## CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE



**\$1.19** average amount a residential will pay per day for water in 2013

**3.4 million** Additional estimated annual replacement funding required.

In addition to existing funding levels



**An increase in infrastructure funding is required to continue supplying safe drinking water now, and into the future.**