



# CHALLENGES IMPLEMENTING ASSET MANAGEMENT IN AN ORGANIZATION

WORKSHOP SUMMARY- OCTOBER 12, 2016

## INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the Round Table discussion “Challenges Implementing Asset Management (AM) in an Organization” facilitated by Golnaz Azimi and Jody Rechenmacher (Urban Systems). Participants of the Round Table shared their experience in implementing AM including barriers, and challenges as well as winning solutions and tips for successful implementation. Facilitators and Sheila Kitz (County of St. Paul) shared their experience and perspective on AM implementation.

## EVIDENCES THAT AN ORGANIZATION IS IMPLEMENTING AM

What are some indicators/evidences that an organization is implementing AM?

- History of replacements
- Records of complaints
- Financial commitments
- Public and Council awareness
- Baseline assessment/s and periodic reviews

There are different indicator/s present in different organizations; also, the level of details could be different (baseline assessments vs. Council endorsement, Corporate AM vs. departmental/detailed).

Levels of Service (LOS) vary amidst organizations including: external LOS, customer LOS, technical and business unit LOS.

Municipalities are at different stages of AM implementation process and different models are used for data management.

Regardless of municipality size, AM is always linked to sustainability (service cost).

## CHALLENGES

What are some of common challenges that communities face when implementing Asset Management?

- Difficulty to get stakeholders buy-in
- Lack of support/team approach
- Initial investment
- Resistance to change, habit of using old technology
- Silos and competing priorities between departments
- Increasing community expectations
- Change of infrastructure use (i.e. rural traffic is replaced by heavy industrial with the development)
- Communications challenges:
  - Lack of common vision and consistent language in an organization
  - Resistance to share information (ex: restricting access to information)
  - Lack of accurate records (ex: as-builts)
- Political/public perception:
  - Misalignment between AM long term focus and short term elected officials
  - Media's focus on negative events vs. showcasing successes
- AM work is competing with position duties, which lowering chances of developing AM strategy (smaller organizations don't designate one person to "only" lead AM)

## SOLUTIONS

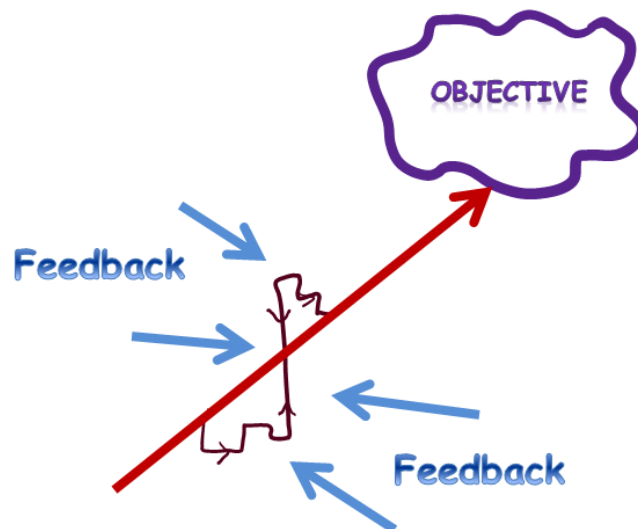
What are some of the methods/tactics used to address these challenges?

- Risk Mitigation – Understanding risks and what's worth mitigating and what's worth tolerating as an organization
- Developing a long term vision and adaptive approach to get there
- Dual approach:
  - Trickle-down: Support from Council and upper level management to empower staff for implementing Asset Management
  - Bottom - up – Technical staff and administration showing the benefit of using data and information for informed decision making to Council and upper level management
- Effective Communications:
  - Sharing information and breaking down silos

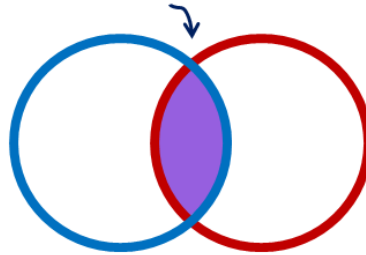
- Managing expectations by clearly communicating the purpose (and contents) of each AM document (AM Plan, Strategy), developing AM Dictionary and common language
- Maintaining sound consistent information and data management practices.
- Focusing on developing a transparent process to break down the silos, rather than putting the responsibility on individuals without providing them with guidance. The process should define roles and responsibilities for the team, and effectively communicate and clearly outline the benefits to them to get their buy-in.
- Do not be afraid to move ahead with an initiative that is different (because, it's okay if we don't get it right the first time, as long as there are processes in place to learn from our experience and correct steps as needed).

## KEY MESSAGES

1. Defining a path to successful implementation depends on context.
  - a. Each organization has a different context and might face different challenges based on that context
2. There are no “Best Practices” for the “How”.
3. There ARE promising solutions. Use your innate human ability to develop an adaptive approach.
  - a. Communication and feedback process is a key in defining and reaching objective



b. Develop shared understanding



Different groups in the organization have different level of understanding of the same subject. Finding where these understandings cross over and developing a shared understanding should be a key objective of any communication plan in the organization.

c. Ensure alignment

Effective communication plan should have check points to ensure that every part of the organization is moving towards the shared objective.

