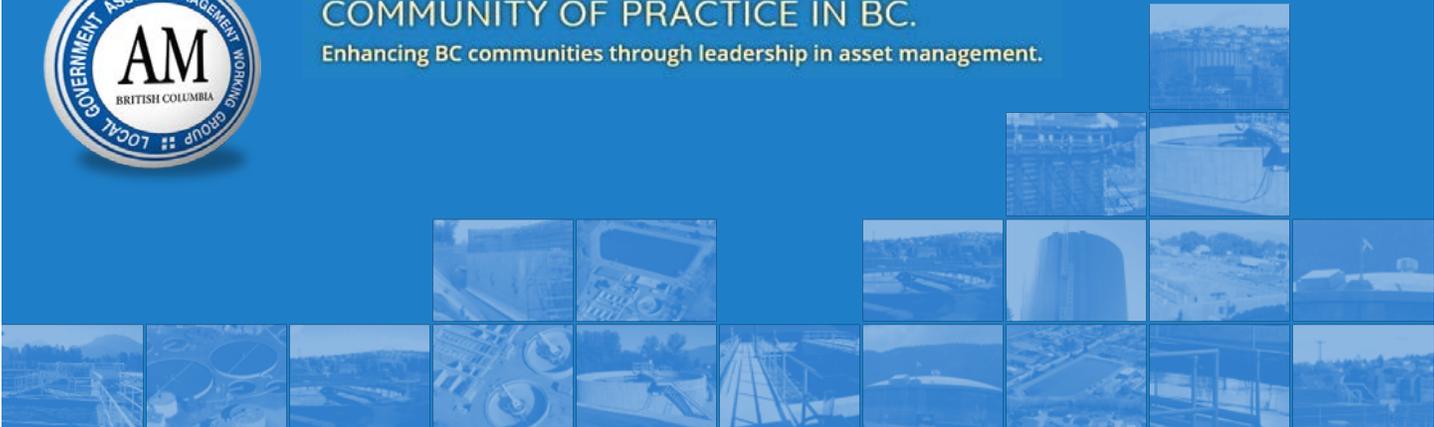




## YOUR LOCAL ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE IN BC.

Enhancing BC communities through leadership in asset management.



TWENTY SECOND EDITION – WINTER 2018

### Operationalizing Asset Management: It's about People, Too

By David W. Love, CD, BA, LGM(Dip), MM, PE, PCAMP  
Senior Advisor, Strategic Initiatives, City of Courtenay



It's increasingly acknowledged in Canadian local government circles that sound Asset Management (AM) practices are the means to achieve Sustainable Service Delivery (and senior government grants!).

The first step in practicing AM is to get to know your assets using "Condition Assessment": what do we have, where are they, what do they do, how do they interact, are they fit for purpose and how much longer can they do what our constituents want them to do at a price they are willing to pay?

Working out the answers to these questions eventually allows for good long-term financial planning to ensure Sustainable Service Delivery. However, regardless what stage of AM practice you're at, stuff and money alone don't deliver local services.

It's also about our people and we discovered a "Condition Assessment" of our staff was necessary, too. But how to do it? Thankfully, the 2014 Canada/BC/UBCM Gas Tax Agreement (Community Works Fund) allows BC local governments to pay for AM 'capacity building', so the financial means were available.

Our AM journey began several years ago when we selected the Australian National Asset Management Strategy (NAMS) as our corporate-wide method of practice.

Over a period of several years we raised the AM literacy throughout the organization by providing an increasing number of staff members with NAMS training workshops – half paid for by UBCM Asset Management Planning grants. But purchasing competencies across the board was not the complete answer.

Coincidentally, we had already engaged INTERACTIONS HR Solutions to review job descriptions and their alignment with the various objectives, purposes and processes in several departments. A series of informal conversations eventually led to a bold step of changing the scale and scope of their mandate:



*"To ensure the City of Courtenay's organizational structure and daily operations align with sound asset management practices to support sustainable service delivery".*

So, "Operationalizing Asset Management" began and we used Gas Tax funds to pay for it.

Of course, setting such a lofty goal was easy, whereas achieving it was daunting. We approached the problem simultaneously along two tracks. First, we continued with the 'Condition Assessment' work already ongoing with our staff and expanded it to encompass all departments.

Second, we thought broadly to imagine some new form of organizational structure that would support the aim.

The ‘Condition Assessment’ of our people (the who, where, what, how, etc.) proved to be achievable using conventional HR practices. This identified who might need which AM competencies, but not how it was all supposed to work on an organization-wide scale.

Fortunately, we’ve been associated with [Asset Management BC](#) since its inception and participated in the development of “*Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery – A BC Framework*”. For those unfamiliar with ‘The Framework’, it contains a graphic depicting the annual AM cycle. In its simplest form, it describes activities in terms of Plan (thinking about the future); Implement (doing things in the present); and Assess (reviewing and acting on knowledge gleaned from the past).

There was our answer in a single ‘aha moment’: reorganize our people into working groups that primarily thought in terms of future, present and past tenses.



The outcome from this line of thinking was that Development Services became all about our future capital assets. They already had the mandate to oversee new, infill and redevelopment that entail all the contributed capital assets we would eventually own. It became apparent the existing folks needed to be supplemented by technical specialists in development engineering (Approving Officer), technologists, plan checking, inspection, specifications and standards, etc. all reporting to a future focussed Director.

Public Works became about the present – responsible to care for the in-service assets throughout their lifecycles. This meant PW became responsible for operating and maintaining the assets and also the bulk of all AM activities. This meant the existing folks had to be

supplemented by a cadre of AM specialists with advanced AM skills and providing organization-wide AM support and leadership.

The Engineering Department became a hybrid, divided into two groups, one each looking to the past AND the other to the future. The past is now about renewal/upgrade of ‘old’ assets identified by the specialists physically located in PW.

The main task became creatively designing and placing new assets into historic physical profiles for a minimum cost. This required different skills than greenfield and brownfield design now practiced in Development Services.

The Engineering folks looking to the future are responsible for network master planning and modelling in support of both Development Services and Public Works. Their main role is to acquire and keep advanced awareness of changing network capacities and suitability. They are to identify early on any upgrades that may be needed as the networks grow, regardless of asset age or condition. This also supports how we integrate our networks with adjacent communities participating in shared services.

Overall, this approach identified who would have what role(s), who needed which competencies and how everyone was to interact in the new organizational structure which was, ultimately, intended to provide the capital assets necessary for Sustainable Service Delivery.

Finally, in the spring of 2016 “Operationalizing Asset Management” was ready. We then developed a comprehensive change management plan consisting of workshops, presentations and dialogue amongst all the affected persons.

The whole thing was led by the CAO, and supported by Council’s Asset Management Policy that had set guidelines for implementing an organization-wide Asset Management processes. This was completed in the fall and the changes were then implemented en masse.

There is no question this was difficult, and we are still tweaking what we learned. But, the most difficult part was conceiving of it. That part we’re happy to share for free.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Editor’s Note: There is more to say. Stay tuned in June 2018 for Part 2 of the on-going story

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## Technology is Changing Asset Management

By Gord Hume, Previous Municipal Councillor and Author<sup>2</sup>



My latest book, "Getting Cities Right" is very much focused on the future for building stronger towns and cities across Canada. Much of that future will be driven by the changes and innovations from technology, and how municipalities will have to adapt and adopt them. This will also dramatically change

Asset Management principles and practices. And they will be a job-disruptor.

By special permission, following is an excerpt from "Getting Cities Right":

"Cities need the courage to be audacious in a too-often beige government world.

They need to embrace new technologies from Artificial Intelligence to Sentient Tools. Municipalities must seek new ways of doing business and innovative plunges

<sup>2</sup> Editors Note: Gord Hume recently published his 7th book "Getting Cities Right,"

A blueprint for creating a better future for our cities & towns, available through Municipal World ([www.municipalworld.com](http://www.municipalworld.com)). Gord was a keynote speaker at Asset Management BC conference in 2016

forward. Municipal leaders need to break through traditional barriers. These are the emerging ambitions and focus for strong, brave councils and cities.

Technology is, and is going to, change everything. Much of that will happen sooner and faster than governments realize. Bureaucracy is not very good at taking swift action to respond to and lead technical innovation.

Urban thinking is beginning to go in fantastic new directions as cities embrace this new ability to cheaply store mega-data in the cloud, coupled with technology that now delivers vast amounts of information through sensors, robots, drones and advanced analytical tools.

This is a new era for cities. It is going to change local government and offer wonderful new opportunities to enhance city-building and citizen satisfaction."

Just a few examples of city-driven innovation using 21<sup>st</sup> century technology:

- Louisville, KY: more than a thousand sensor-equipped asthma inhalers were distributed. The data collected allows the city to map poor-quality air locations—and to take action, such as planting trees along a road with very high use of inhalers.
- Singapore: has used aerial photography and drone technology to map locations for future solar panels and roof gardens. Several cities are now looking at themselves from above—which provides a new and useful tool for planning purposes.
- Mobile, AL: it took city building inspectors just eight days to inventory over 1200 blighted properties by using Instagram to snap pictures of the dilapidated homes. The city then cross-referenced tax and other data to create a contemporary "blight index" of all problem properties in that city.
- New Orleans, LA: the city used Census data to identify neighborhoods with the highest ratio of children and seniors, and then proactively went to higher-risk homes in those areas installing free smoke detectors.
- \*Chicago, IL: the city developed an algorithm to predict restaurants that had a higher probability of food violations. The predictive analytic improved inspections--and public health.

Sometimes municipalities just have to be audacious in thinking and action. They have to embrace new ways of thinking and doing. They must understand this revolution that technology will cause. They must assume the heavy burden of leadership for

governments, because municipalities are ideally positioned to be that laboratory for innovation in public service.

Successful municipalities of all sizes are leaders. They are focused on the road ahead, not peering disconsolately into the rear-view mirror. They are not locked into the routines, budgets and structures of the past in their municipal operations today.

They are studying new opportunities and courageously indulging in creative and different thinking about their communities. They are questioning the old and the routine, and are searching for better ways. They are delivering new products and services to their residents, often in hi-tech and innovative ways.

### The Technology Revolution Has Started

Technology is zooming ahead, and it is leaving most governments in that rear-view mirror. Audacious cities 'get' technology. They understand the game-changing impact that the digital revolution and the next-gen tech enhancements and discoveries are having on people's lives, as well as how governments function.

A huge problem in Canada is that governments lag badly behind both regulating and adopting technology. Research and innovation drive rapid changes in the hi-tech field, while bureaucrats tend to be protective, slow and locked into their silos. Policy-making from all orders of government must become more risk-tolerant and much faster.

It is clear and it is simple: technology is going to change how governments operate on a day-to-day basis, how people do their jobs (and what jobs they will do!), how families live their lives, and how innovative the future will be.

It is impossible to over-emphasize this tech revolution and its impacts. Council members and senior administration must be planning now for how towns and cities will be designed and operated in the future. They must adopt changes to how city halls have traditionally done business and served the public."

For Asset Management, this hi-tech revolution will mean new practices and will change traditional operations. Suddenly the issues of using drones for everything from checking the condition of sewers to fighting fires become realistic. Robots giving out parking tickets? Sure. Artificial Intelligence answering phones and giving consumers information? Absolutely.

And with all of these come new concerns about liability, insurance, public privacy and safety, risk management and so on.

What happens if a robot delivering packages goes berserk on a public sidewalk? What happens at the University of Michigan when an autonomous vehicle delivers a pizza to a student residence (it is happening now) but somehow is involved in an accident on a street corner with a city vehicle? Tough to sue the driver!

Asset Management is moving to a distinct new level. It will be unlike any other.

## Rossland's Asset Management Planning Takes Center Stage at BC Conference

*Chelsea Novak (Nov 23, 2017) Reprinted with permission of Black Press "The Rossland News".*



Mayor Kathy Moore and CAO Bryan Teasdale recapped Rossland's asset and infrastructure planning.

The City of Rossland's recent efforts to create a strong policy and decision-making framework for municipal asset management took centre stage at the 2017 Asset Management BC Conference in Richmond on Friday, Nov. 10 as Rossland's mayor and chief administrative officer delivered the day's keynote speech.

In their presentation, Mayor Kathy Moore and CAO Bryan Teasdale recapped Rossland's history in regards to assets and infrastructure planning.

"In the recent past, our approach to infrastructure renewal was closer to a policy of Disaster Response than a systematic strategy to upgrade our essential services based on a comprehensive plan," Moore wrote in her notes.

But as part of its overall strategic plan, the current council has been undergoing a process to address asset management. It began with the City of Rosland applying for a grant through the Strategic Priorities Fund in early 2015, according to the presentation. With the funding secured, the City was able to begin work on updating its existing Asset Management Investment Plan (AMIP).

That process has included an organizational assessment that allowed the city to “develop a clear understanding of where the organization needs to build [Asset Management] Capacity over the next two to seven years,” and the development of both an Asset Management Policy and Capital Prioritization Framework.

The process will culminate in a new AMIP, which Teasdale says should be presented to council at the next council meeting on Monday.

“There’s going to be a huge ... chart that says, ‘This is how much money it’s going to cost us to do things and this is how much money we actually have to do things’. So what the policies are going to allow us to do is to sit down and talk about risk, talk about deferment of projects, talk about how we’re going to fund projects, talk about the strategy on property taxation and user fees,” explains Teasdale.

Part of the asset management strategy is to also update the AMIP on an annual basis, pushing projects back or moving them forward based on things like the funding available (i.e. grants) or the risk of deferring the project, and adjusting estimated costs.

“We do that already to begin with ... because when we do a capital budget every year we look at things going, ‘What is it that we know now that we need to do next year?’ So, what [the AMIP] does is helps us formalize a plan to sit down and develop that,” explains Teasdale. “Instead of thinking about just a one- or two-year capital program, or even thinking about a five-year capital program, we sit down and try and think about ‘What do we need to do for the next 25 to 30 years.’”

The process has also included implementing strategies for collecting data from various city departments and adding relevant information to the city’s geographic information system (GIS).

Teasdale says that the presentation he and Mayor Moore gave at the Asset Management BC Conference was well

received, but points out that it was “preaching to the choir.”

“But we have a lot of takeaways on things and we get to learn about best management practices that other municipalities have put in. It doesn’t matter if you’re small or if you’re big. You can start from somewhere and do what you have to do and at least you’re starting to do something,” he says.

## There is No Such Thing as a Dragon

By: Christina Benty, Former Mayor of the Town of Golden  
Strategic Leadership Solutions, Golden, BC



I somewhat jokingly like to call myself an ‘asset management evangelist’. My super power is that I can turn any conversation into one about asset management (and I still have friends albeit well versed in eye rolling). I see asset management analogies and metaphors everywhere. I

may, however, have taken it too far.

Now that I have a granddaughter, I love looking for kids’ books with meaningful life messages. This past Christmas, I came across a book called “There’s No Such Thing as a Dragon”. It is a story of a young boy who wakes up to find a kitten sized dragon in his room. When he tells his mom about it, she insists that there is no such thing as a dragon. The little dragon eats all the little boy’s food and it starts to grow. As it grows and grows, it fills his room and fills the upstairs.

The boy is mystified. If there is no such thing as a dragon, then it would be silly to do anything about it! The dragon continues to grow until eventually, it fills the whole house. When the house is lifted off the foundation by the dragon, his family asks, “how did this happen?” The little boy points to the dragon. His mother starts to deny the existence of dragons but the boy is resolute. “There is a dragon and a very big one.” Once the family acknowledges its presence it begins to shrink until it is back down to a manageable size.

So, you probably know where I am going with this, right?

Given that the national infrastructure deficit is quoted as being somewhere around 300 BILLION, there is a dragon and a very big one. The long-time practice of short-term decisions about investment, maintenance, and renewal is not sustainable.

Municipalities across the country are compelled to confront this challenge of managing public assets in a formalized process. By now, local governments know that sound asset management practices help communities use their limited resources wisely to ensure safe, reliable, secure services are provided in a predictable, cost effective manner now and into the future.

I know, I know, I am preaching to the choir!

Local governments may be reluctantly facing the dragon but who else needs to know? Here in BC, we have local government elections coming up this fall. The question we must ask ourselves is this: will the citizenry acknowledge the dragon or will the broad range of problems far beyond the scope and expertise of local government dominate election conversations?

Many communities continue to fall into the trap of expending significant time and energy on issues outside the core responsibilities of local government. Housing, economic development, pipelines, refugees, GMOs, poverty reduction, childcare, school closures are all pressing social issues and important community concerns; however, they also tend to be highly distracting from the legislated work of local government.

What is most disturbing is the fact that a growing infrastructure deficit (the dragon) is forced to fight to stay on the radar. The state of our community's assets, of which the operations, maintenance and care is a fundamental role of local governments, should not have to compete with other critical provincial and national concerns.

Election time is an opportunity to get the message out there, to quantify the true cost of providing, maintaining, and renewing community-owned capital assets, and balance it against the community's willingness to pay for those services and assets. Communication and engagement with residents and potential candidates is needed to build a better understanding of both service delivery realities and the inter-organizational pressures that accompany them. It is critical that the limits and challenges of local government are rightly understood in the context of the broader government system.

Local governments and their citizens need to face their growing problems with aging infrastructure together. Residents and potential candidates must understand the magnitude of the problem and the financial implications so that everyone can work together to face these challenges.

It is only when we stop saying there is no such thing as a dragon that we can reverse the trend of declining infrastructure and systematically engage in the long-term planning of asset renewal investments that support our communities' quality of life, protect our health and safety, and promote our social, economic and environmental well-being. By facing the dragon together, new councils can focus on what really matters right out of the gate; protecting the very foundation of what makes our communities wonderful places to live, work, and play. We owe it to ourselves to see, to acknowledge and to manage the dragon.

## Asset Management BC

### A New Look – to Serve You Better

Asset Management is an integrated function across the depth of our organizations. Our physical assets are vital to the services we provide for our communities. With aging infrastructure, the need to plan for organized upgrade and replacement of our assets is vital. But how?

Asset Management BC (AM BC) evolved out of the need for information sharing and knowledge transfer across our many disciplines and skill sets delivering our local services. To bring the disciplines together AM BC formed a "Working Group as an advisory panel on what our communities need. Participants are dedicated individuals from our professional associations, the Province of BC, all forms of local government in BC, First Nations and Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Over several years, the knowledge base of asset management increased and was shared primarily through AM BC, including the development of tools and offering training programs. As asset management became a requirement in funding programs, AM BC became the focus for information including the core BC document "***Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework***".

A formal partnership has now evolved to help drive 'integrated asset management'. The partnership brings together core groups, all with a strong commitment individually and collective to asset management. The Partnership Committee includes:

- Union of British Columbia Municipalities
- Province of BC (Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing)
- Local Government Management Association of BC
- Local Government Management Association
- Government Finance Officers Association of BC
- Municipal Insurance Association of BC
- Planning Institute of BC
- British Columbia Water & Waste Association
- Public Works Association of BC
- CivicInfo BC

Representatives of each of the above groups form a Partnership Committee and contribute financially to support [Asset Management BC](#). UBCM provides an administrative role. AM BC will continue with its own Executive Director.

AM BC will rely on the AM Working Group, which has helped define our community needs for asset management since the beginning. The group is a “Community of Practice” and includes all partners listed above plus other like Associations, all forms of local governments in BC, First Nations and Aboriginal and Affairs. This continues to be a group of very enthusiastic and committed people who generate great ideas and direction. The strengthened [Asset Management BC](#) will continue to provide resources, training,

conferences, assistance and advice to our BC communities. We are here for one purpose - information transfer and knowledge sharing for you.

Contact information for AM BC is:

E-mail: [info@assetmanagementbc.ca](mailto:info@assetmanagementbc.ca)

Website: [www.assetmanagementbc.ca](http://www.assetmanagementbc.ca)

## Your Primer for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual CNAM National Conference

*By Melissa Osborne, City of Windsor, Conference Chair and Vice Chair, CNAM*

As the song goes, ‘You ain’t seen nothing yet’. As the 2018 Conference Chair and CNAM Vice Chair it gives me great pleasure to invite you to CNAM 2018 being held in Windsor, Ontario from May 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> at Caesar’s Windsor. The conference is shaping up to be a must attend event as we focus on ‘Bridging the Gap’ in infrastructure finance, engineering and public policy that sometimes exists within the asset management profession in Canada, and around the world.

This year’s event will have over 70 concurrent sessions, including 6 workshops. We are also pleased to have several submissions from across Canada as well as from several cities in Michigan looking to share their experiences and network with other asset managers. Final touches on the programming are in progress and will be available prior to the end of January.

The Windsor/Detroit border is the busiest US / Canada border with over \$500M in daily trade. We welcome the Windsor-Bridge Authority as one of our keynote speakers to provide attendees with an understanding of the complex design, build and maintenance aspects of the International Gordie Howe Bridge project.

The multi-billion-dollar investment includes a 6-lane bridge, both US and Canadian Ports of Entry, as well as improvements to the Michigan Interchange, not to mention municipal, provincial/state and federal government dynamics in this P3 initiative. Hear about how this significant infrastructure investment is progressing, as well as the dynamics and impact it will have in the area.

## Asset Management BC Conference – 2018



September 27 and 28, 2018  
Vancouver (Richmond) Airport

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Watch for detailed information

**BRIDGING THE GAP****CNAM 2018 Conference**

May 14-17 Windsor, Ontario

• Connecting to the Future of Asset Management •



Monday May 14<sup>th</sup> will be the start of the conference offering attendees a technical tour of the Windsor International Aquatics and Training Center, which includes a 35,000 sqft indoor water park, as well as the Art Gallery and Chimczuk Museum, recently merged in 2016. Take a behind the scenes look at the infrastructure which operates these unique facilities.

If a fun tour is what you are looking for join us for the Whiskey's and Brews tours of Wiser's Distillery and Walkerville Brewery. Both located in the heart of historic Walkerville area of Windsor, take a tour of each location and then enjoy a few samples. Or perhaps you want to dust off your golf clubs and join us at CNAM's first golf tournament being held at Roseland Golf course, designed by Donald Ross.

Windsor also boasts 5 kilometers of trails running along the Detroit River shoreline, located steps away from Caesar's Windsor. Enjoy the beautiful gardens, waterfront and our spectacular Windsor Sculpture Park, a museum without walls, as you make your way along the paved paths.

Also keep an eye out for our awards nomination which will open January 30<sup>th</sup>. This year we will be adding an *Asset Management Ambassador Award* to complement our annual *Tereo Award* and *Asset Management Pioneer Award* (introduced in 2017).

The Ambassador Award honours individuals or companies whose efforts reflect a commitment above and beyond the accepted expectation of the asset management industry in Canada. It recognizes individuals or companies whose actions have become a valuable asset to the asset management industry and acknowledges those whose actions have become models for peer recognition. For more information on all our award categories and to see past winners visit <http://cnam.ca/professional-development/tereo-awards/>

Now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, the CNAM Conference and Tradeshow will continue to deliver leading edge professional development, idea sharing, workshops and fun networking opportunities with your peers and new players in government, academia and industry.

CNAM is growing and poised to help you and your organization connect to the future of asset management, so mark your calendars and book your reservations for May 14 – 17, 2018 and we'll see you then! <http://cnam.ca/events/conference/2018-conference/accommodations/>

## CNAM Partners with AM BC to Host Workshop



A one-day workshop on “**Asset Management Awareness**” will be held March 12 sponsored by CNAM. It will be held at the UBC Okanagan Campus, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7



The session will be appropriate for Municipal Staff and Elected Officials who will leave the workshop with a better understanding of what asset management is, why it should be undertaken, what it entails and how to begin implementation with some tangible steps. This is relevant for all municipalities, regardless of your size and location.

Discounted rate for municipal / community staff is \$95 plus tax per person. This includes learning material, lunch and refreshments.

Registration opens in early February – to register and for more information go to [www.cnam.ca/NewToAM](http://www.cnam.ca/NewToAM).

## Are We Barking up the Right Tree?

By Wally Wells, Executive Director of Asset Management BC<sup>3</sup>

Well, I know we are in the right forest but are we at the right tree? I constantly ask myself, “If Asset Management is just good business, why are people not getting it?” If you ask yourself the same question daily, as I have for months, eventually you come up with an answer.

In British Columbia, our *Community Charter*, the permissive legislation that creates and empowers most of our municipalities, clearly states the role of Council:

Part 2, Division 1, Section 7

The purposes of a municipality include:

- (a) providing for good government of its community,
- (b) providing for services, laws and other matters for community benefit,
- (c) providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community, and
- (d) fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community.

Citizens expect government to provide for the public good. When we look at what asset management achieves, Council’s role stated above is fulfilled in many ways by the results of the asset management process.



In BC, we do not talk about the asset management plan in isolation of the total process. The document, “**Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery – A BC Framework**”, covers the entire process with the AM plan

<sup>3</sup> Editor’s Note: The following is an opinion expressed by Wally Wells, Executive Director of Asset Management BC and is work-in-progress. It is not an official opinion of Asset Management BC

being only a part of the process. There are a lot of asset management plans out there, but have we ever seriously looked at the content and structure of the plan to see if it right for Council?

A small group of us, all with prior municipal employment experience, continue our discussions on ‘how to we get engagement with Council and ultimately the public?’

The results of our conversations to date have identified a number of apparent deficiencies in our process. The plans we often take to Council are complex with a load of technical and financial information. This often is too much for Council. Likely much of this information, highly relevant for staff, should form an appendix or support document. What seems to be missing in the Council document is linking their responsibilities to the asset management process. With less technical information presented, Council can focus on their issues. The asset management policy, most often not part of the Council document, is core to a successful process and influences how the municipalities will proceed.

Other areas that should be included are alternative implementation strategies, including short term strategies such as improving maintenance, some quick wins for Council, monitoring and measuring, and the resource capacity issue, both in skill sets and staff availability. The latter can be addressed later but needs clearly must be identified with Council.

We are aware of growing list of communities finding themselves deficient in staff resources and staff training to implement the process. Without this co-relation to staff and knowledge needs, the plans will not be fully implemented.

This is only the start of a dialogue which we will continue and report on in later issues. Make your comments known and be a contributor.

## All Things Unseen

By Christina Bentley, Former Mayor of the Town of Golden  
Strategic Leadership Solutions, Golden, BC

Whether it be the tangible unseen such as sewer and water, or the more ethereal unseen such as policy and strategy, I love talking! As an asset management evangelist, I am desperately trying to inspire local governments to take their stewardship responsibilities seriously. My mission is to convert the unconverted and inject some passion into this complex topic. So just imagine my delight when I was bestowed with the

privilege of working with [AIM Network](#) to deliver asset management readiness workshops to over 15 communities across Atlantic Canada. Fashioned after AM BC, the mandate of AIM Network is to guide and support infrastructure management planning for municipalities in Atlantic Canada. It was an incredible experience that allowed me to live in my sweet spot. Amongst the many highlights, I observed one common but relevant phenomenon.

### My Significant Observation

One of the more interesting conversations that took place was around the role of Council. I was surprised at how many politicians acknowledged the importance of sound asset management practices and yet had no policy in place. Being my cheeky self, I would tell my participants, believe it or not, politician doesn't mean liar and cheat, it means policy setter. It is your primary job to provide clear, broad direction through policy and let staff flush out the details. In the absence of a policy, staff are forced to guess what Council wants thereby putting them in a very untenable situation.

When things are functioning smoothly, a lack of policy is unnoticeable but when there is a service disruption or an asset failure, the potential for finger pointing is high. Given the tension between risk, cost and performance, a lack of clarity sets the stage for the making of assumptions.

So why have a policy?

- A policy outlines the community's long-term goals and objectives with a systematic process on how those goals and objectives will be achieved
- A policy defines Council's role and responsibility and demonstrates Council's commitment to the asset management process
- A policy directs staff to implement the asset management process into budgeting, planning and decision making.

The real question is, why not have a policy?

### My Incredible Highlight

Although it can be difficult to make infrastructure renewal and asset management sexy or exciting, nothing lingers like a familiar tune in your head. After a bottle of red and smooth strumming guitar, what emerged was an attempt to make tangible and applicable the parts of governance that lurk in the shadow, that hover in places

ethereal, that carry the liquid of life but exist down on the corner, under the street.

Here is a sample of our practice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eIBKDoh-Yk>

Tune by CCR, lyrics by Christina, rock star guitar playing by Tjaart Van den Berg and guest appearance by Daisy Foster, Executive Director, Atlantic Infrastructure Management. The highlight for me was having 200 elected officials and staff singing with me during the UNSM conference.

Early in the season

Just about budget time

Council wants no tax increase

Staff starting to lose their mind

Infrastructure gap is growing

We got no policy

We deferred our maintenance

Be Reactive is our strategy

**Chorus:**

***Down on the Corner***

***Under the street***

***Water main's about to blow***

***Bring a nickel, tap your feet***

Buried under piles of data

None of it makes sense

Time to call AIM Network

To help clean up the mess

Inventory and condition

What's the life expectancy

We need more information

To know what the cost will be

**Chorus**

How do we tell the public

That things are really bad

It's gonna cost some money

And you know they will be mad

We have to tell the truth

Communication is the key

For future generations

What is our destiny

Is it gonna be.....

**Chorus**

## Register for NAMS Training Program for Asset Management – 2018

Asset Management BC will again organize NAMS training sessions for municipal staff for asset management. The three-day course has been offered for the past few years throughout BC with great success.

The cost for registration is \$1,650 per person. Subsidy is available from UBCM of 50% for up to three registrants per local government. See UBCM website for details.

Currently scheduled:

- **Kamloops:** February 28, March 1 & 2, 2018
- **Vancouver Island or Lower mainland:**  
Possible June (need more interest, please advise)

Other workshops will be scheduled where there is enough demand.

We must achieve 20 registrants per workshop or it will be cancelled. If you are interested in NAMS training, please advise us now.

For more detailed information on course content and preparation, contact: Wally Wells, Executive Director [Asset Management BC \(wwells@live.ca\)](mailto:wwells@live.ca).

Registration will be available for Kamloops now through CivicInfo BC ([www.civicinfo.bc.ca](http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca)). Go to events and scroll to the correct dates.

## Upcoming Events

### Federation of Canadian Municipalities

February 6 – 8, 2018  
Sustainable Communities Conference  
Ottawa Convention Centre  
Ottawa, ON  
[www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)



### Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta

February 7, 2018  
One day Workshop  
Cross Roads Church,  
Red Deer AB  
[www.assetmanagementab.ca](http://www.assetmanagementab.ca)

### Canadian Network of Asset Managers

May 12, 2018  
Asset Management Awareness Workshop  
UBC Okanagan Campus  
Kelowna, BC  
[www.cnam.ca](http://www.cnam.ca)

### Top 100 Infrastructure Projects (ReNew Magazine)

February 20, 2018  
Key players and Owners dinner  
The Carlu – Toronto ON.  
[www.top100projects.ca](http://www.top100projects.ca)

### Municipal Insurance Association of BC

April 11 – 13, 2018  
7th Annual Risk Management Conference  
Hyatt Regency Vancouver  
Vancouver, BC  
[www.miabc.org](http://www.miabc.org)

### Recreation Facilities Association of BC

April 23 - 26, 2018  
Annual Conference  
The Delta Grand Okanagan Resort  
Kelowna, BC  
[www.rfabc.com](http://www.rfabc.com)

### Local Government Management Association

May 15 - 18, 2018  
Conference & Annual General Meeting  
Victoria Convention Centre  
Victoria, BC  
[www.lgma.ca](http://www.lgma.ca)

### BC Water and Waste Association

May 13 – 15, 2018  
46th Annual Conference and Trade Show  
Conference Centre  
Penticton, BC  
[www.bcwwa.org](http://www.bcwwa.org)

### Canadian Network of Asset Managers

May 14 – 17, 2018  
12<sup>th</sup> Annual Networking Conference and Workshops  
Windsor, ON  
[www.cnam.ca](http://www.cnam.ca)

**Planning Institute of BC**

May 29 -June 1, 2018  
Annual Conference – The Game Plan  
Victoria Conference Centre,  
Victoria BC  
[www.pibc.bc.ca](http://www.pibc.bc.ca)

**Government Financial Officers Association of BC**

May 30 – June 1, 2018  
Annual Conference  
Delta Okanagan Grand  
Kelowna, BC  
[www.gfoabc.ca](http://www.gfoabc.ca)

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities**

May 31 – June 3, 2018  
Annual Conference and Trade show  
Halifax Convention Centre  
Halifax, NS  
[www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)

**Canadian Water Summit**

June 20 - 22, 2018  
9<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit  
Marriott Pinnacle Hotel - Vancouver, BC  
[www.watersummit.ca](http://www.watersummit.ca)

**Public Works Association of BC**

September 16 –19, 2018  
Annual Conference and Trade Show  
Sun Peaks Grand Hotel and Conference Centre  
Sun Peaks, BC  
[www.pwabc.ca](http://www.pwabc.ca)

**Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)**

September 10 - 14, 2018  
Annual Conference and Trade Show  
Whistler, BC  
[www.ubcm.ca](http://www.ubcm.ca)

**Asset Management BC**

September 27 - 28, 2018  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Asset Management Conference  
Vancouver (Richmond) BC  
[www.assetmanagementbc.ca](http://www.assetmanagementbc.ca)

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## Questions & Answers

We strongly encourage you to raise questions and make comments as this newsletter is provided for the advancement of Asset Management. Email questions or comments to the editor and note if you wish to be anonymous or not to have comment published.

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