



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

Enhancing BC communities through leadership in asset management.

THIRTY-EIGHTH EDITION – WINTER 2023

### Why BC's local government elected officials need to be leading Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery in their Communities

*By David Allen, Executive Director Asset Management BC and retired Chief Administrative Officer, City of Courtenay*



As we lean into the new year following the BC local government elections last October, the theme of this first 2023 edition of the Asset Management BC Newsletter explores the role of senior leadership in implementing asset management for sustainable service delivery.

Thanks to the contributions of AMBC's many local government practitioners and champions we are pleased to provide several articles that ask the question, "What would you tell your new Council or Board about why asset management matters?" The authors of these articles represent a diverse background of professions, organizations, and communities. The result is that the messages they convey reflect a range of perspectives and approaches that they believe will resonate with their respective elected leaders.

In early 2023 the Local Government Leadership Academy (LGLA) will be inviting all newly elected and returning elected officials and senior staff to the Elected Officials Seminar Series (EOS). Held every four years, following the BC local government elections, the EOS seminars include

stops in each of UBCM's five Area Associations, providing a 3-day orientation and networking program on roles and responsibilities, stewardship, and good governance.

It's worth noting that the LGLA was created in 2005 as a leadership development initiative in response to the need for ongoing training and educational resources for BC local government and First Nation officials and senior administrators.

Seeded by an initial \$1 million from the Province and support from four future AMBC partners (UBCM, LGMA, MFA, MIABC), the LGLA was one of the first local government organizations to recognize the importance of leadership in "stewardship" and the important role of asset management as the path to sustainable service delivery.

In February and March 2023, Asset Management BC representatives will be presenting in Richmond, Nanaimo, Kelowna, Kimberly, and Prince George on strategies for helping BC communities achieve long term sustainable service delivery. AMBC will also be hosting a booth with information about asset management, why it is important, what it is, and how BC communities can progress toward sustainable service delivery.

What are the key messages we hope to communicate at the LGLA sessions?

**Asset management focused on sustainable service delivery is fundamental to helping local government and First Nation communities achieve their primary purposes.**

Section 7 of the BC Community Charter is the legislation that defines the purposes of BC municipalities:

- 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.

## What is Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery and why does it matter?

Sustainable Service Delivery ensures that current community service needs, and how those services are delivered (in a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible manner), do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Service Delivery lies at the centre of the asset management process and is the purpose and desired outcome of asset management.

Assets and other local government infrastructure exist to provide services, and it is the services that local governments provide that support community wellbeing.



In BC, local government asset management is based on *Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework* (the “Framework”) - [Framework and Primers - Asset Management BC](#).

The Framework aligns with the ‘BC Approach’ for asset management and establishes a high-level systematic approach that supports local governments to move toward service, asset, and financial sustainability through an asset management process.

The Framework was designed for local government staff to advance asset management practices in their organizations and provides a common system for understanding the key concepts of asset management. It is represented graphically by the ‘AM Wheel’ (shown above) - a circular, continuous process that is ongoing and requires continuous review and improvement.

### Articles in this Edition:

- **Feature Article: Why BC’s local government elected officials need to be leading Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery in their Communities**
- **Asset Management and Sustainable Service Delivery: Why should Council care?**
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  - › Perspective from planning and sustainability
  - › Perspective from a retired Public Works Manager
- **Artificial Intelligence: Our Newest Asset Management Tool**
- **AMBC Annual Conference Great Success**
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- **CNAM Conference 2023**
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The Framework is complimented by the four Asset Management Primers related to Land Use Planning, Operations, Climate Change, and Natural Assets, along with the additional tools and resources available on the [Asset Management BC](#) website.

Local Government and First Nation elected, and senior administrative leaders are critical to successfully implementing and operationalizing organization-wide asset management.

Effective Councils, Boards, and senior administrators demonstrate a strong commitment to asset management for Sustainable Service Delivery and create a culture that enables success, aligns people toward a common purpose and motivates the organization to incrementally improve and progress.

Councils and Boards have the authority to establish asset management policies and strategies that integrate and support the other corporate strategies and plans that guide community growth and development. Most importantly, they have authority to approve long term

financial plans (10 + years) that fund asset management plans and strategies. Without adequate funding for asset management, progress toward Sustainable Service Delivery cannot be realized.

To date at least two Canadian municipal councils (City of Courtenay in BC and City of Selkirk in Manitoba) have adopted asset management bylaws that require them to consider the full lifecycle costs of their assets when making decisions. Bylaws provide a higher level of commitment than policies and demonstrate a stronger commitment by elected leaders.

Local Government CAOs/City Managers, and First Nation Senior Administrators have a significant leadership role in operationalizing organization-wide asset management, by leading and supporting a positive organizational culture, ensuring optimal organizational alignment, and working with their elected leaders to ensure staff competencies and capacity are adequately resourced.

My own experience as a CAO has taught me that the path toward Sustainable Service Delivery can be realized through sound asset management practices combined with a scalable and incremental approach. Asset management policies, bylaws, and strategies enable senior administrators and staff to move forward with greater certainty, knowing they have clear support of their elected leaders.

## Asset Management and Sustainable Service Delivery: Why should Council care?

*Wally Wells P. Eng. Asset Management BC*

After the 2018 election for Councils and Board for our local governments in BC, we asked several knowledgeable people to tell us ***“What would you say to a new Council about asset management and sustainable service delivery?”*** Having just completed another election, it is time to help with information again for new Councils.

The purpose of local government in our municipalities is stated in the BC Community Charter, 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.*

Asset Management is a process for decision-making for sustainable services. Our physical assets - the built environment in our communities - supports delivery of those services. Our natural assets play a significant role in our community and need understanding, management, and protection to sustain that role. Effective use of natural assets is proven to save communities a substantial amount of money and provide for the betterment of the community. Climate change considerations must also be integrated into the decision-making process

The opinion and advice of peers is of great value in communicating the role of asset management for sustainable service delivery. Read the articles in this newsletter about what to tell a new Council for guidance and advice from different perspectives.

Thank you to the contributors for these articles:

- › Christina Benty, prior Council member then Mayor of the Town of Golden BC. Christina now provides Council education and training through Strategic Leadership Solutions
- › Khalie Genereaux, Deputy Director of Finance, City of Terrace
- › Kim Stephens, Executive Director, Partnership for Water Sustainability, BC
- › Doug Allin, Chief Administrative Officer, Spallumcheen Township
- › Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works, City of Nanaimo
- › Paul Murray, Prior Chief Financial officer, and Chief Administrative Officer, now provides training and assistance through the Brentwood Advisory Group
- › Kristy Bobbie, Asset Manager, City of Prince George
- › Kim Fowler, Manager, Long Range Planning, Sustainability and Energy, RD of Nanaimo
- › Joe McGowan, Manager of Public Works, City of Cranbrook (retired).

## What would you tell a new Council about Sustainable Services Delivery through asset management?

### Perspective from a former politician

*Christina Benty former Council member and Mayor, Town of Golden BC, trainer: Strategic Partnership Solutions and Asset Management Champion*



## WHY

I would start with why. Why does local government exist in the first place?

Despite popular belief, local government was created with a special purpose in mind, and not as the hotbed of corruption and incompetence as often portrayed at the coffee shop or in the gutters of social media. Quite the opposite. Local government was created to provide a broad range of localized services and functions on behalf of the Provincial Government that have a direct impact on the health, safety, and quality of life for the residents of the community. Local government exists as a service provider. These services are collectively agreed upon and paid for. Local government has been granted the tools to collect revenue to pay for those services in the form of local property taxes and user fees.

The fundamental belief is that collectively, by pooling our resources, we can enjoy services and amenities that we would not be able to on our own. Water and sewer systems, paved roads and sidewalks, parks and trails, fire halls and police stations, recreational facilities, and multi-purpose buildings, are all examples of community infrastructure that were built with pooled resources. We could never build and maintain these things individually on our own.

Hence, local government exists to provide safe, sustainable, secure services in a predictable, cost-effective manner.

## WHO

Who delivers these services? It is certainly not Council. You don't see Council out plowing the streets or watering the flowers or monitoring the safety of the drinking water.

It is local government staff that deliver services and manage the amenities that provide those services for the greater good of the community. They are trained experts in their field, educated and experienced in delivering services in a seamless fashion.

This all seems obvious, but it begs the question: why do we need elected officials? This is an important question and often poorly understood. Council is not elected to be helpful to staff or to tell them how to deliver services. Elected officials are not meant to be experts in recreation or engineering or water regulations.

At the end of the day, Council's role is **GOVERNANCE** - strategic leadership and responsible stewardship for the



services and infrastructure that make our communities awesome. With a healthy balance of differing perspectives and skills, good leaders set regulations (bylaws) and policy that will serve the community and provide clear overarching direction now and into the future. They do not "run the town" or manage the community; they provide strategic direction through policy and give staff the resources necessary to deliver services based on those regulations and policies.

## HOW

The full purpose of Council is to represent the community and to reflect the will of the people in two key areas:

1. **What services does our community want and need now and into the future, (and at what level)?**
2. **What services is our community willing and able to pay for?**

What would I tell a new municipal Council about how to maintain the sustainability of their local government services through asset management? Start by posting these two questions to your desktop. Every strategic initiative, every policy, every decision, every resolution, every by-law, every component of financial planning needs to be in service of these two questions.

**These questions are simple, but they are not easy. If you are keen to provide safe, sustainable, and secure services in a predictable and cost-effective manner in a system that continually performs while balancing expenditures and managing risks, these two questions will serve as a guide to leadership excellence in your community.**

**That is what asset management is all about!**

## What would you tell a new Council? Perspective from a Deputy Director of Finance and Chair of AM Leadership Team

*Khalie Genereaux, Deputy Director of Finance, City of Terrace*

### Why didn't we talk about this sooner?

Asset management is not new. Government staff have been working on it since the first assets were built in their area. Whether it was in their head or on a spreadsheet, it has always been on somebody's mind somewhere. What is new are the accounting



standards around asset management and the attention being paid to a long-term financial strategy to support it.

In 2009, PSAB 3150 was adopted by the Public Service Accounting Board. PSAB 3150 requires local governments to amortize their tangible capital assets over their expected useful life. Prior to this there were no standards in place for the valuation and deterioration of the local government assets. Consequently, the funding for renewal and replacement has not always been top of mind or top priority. As many of our aging communities are seeing their assets reach the end of their useful lives, the funding portion can no longer be ignored. If it is, we could all see ourselves declaring a local state of emergency.

### Why do we need to keep talking about this?

Asset management is crucial to all local governments. As Council it is very easy to get distracted by the new shiny assets that you have influence on in your term. While most people like shiny things, consideration always needs to be placed on: Does the budget have room to maintain, operate, and replace these in future years? And/or are our taxpayers willing to pay additional taxes for this item well into the future? If these things are not considered from the outset, then essentially all you are doing is passing the problem down the line to the next Council. Consequently, by doing so you are not following your purpose and responsibility as set out in the Community Charter by:

- 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.*

### How can you influence Asset Management in your term?

Asset management will not succeed without support from the top. It is an organization-wide function that will fail if Council does not buy into the work that is going into it. Local governments need to be proactive with their planning rather than reactive to the outcomes of not planning. In addition, local governments need to look at how to best meet the needs of the future so that they are not leaving a large deficit for generations to come. The natural gap that forms between numbers and processes needs to be bridged with financial strategy to ensure that everybody is working together in efforts to maintain sustainable service delivery well into the future. Financial strategy gets adopted by Council and trickles down to the rest of the organization through processes and policies.

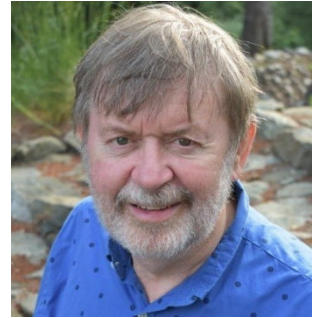
**It starts and ends with decisions made at the top!**

## What would you tell a new Council about Sustainable Service Delivery through asset management?

### A water sustainability perspective

*Kim Stephens, Executive Director, Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC*

My over-arching message to those who were elected to municipal councils and regional boards in October 2022 is succinct: *"Get the water part right in a changing climate, and you will be amazed how other parts of the community resiliency puzzle then fall into place."*



A supporting message that drills down from this big picture view is expressed this way: *"Our land ethic has consequences for water. This means elected representatives need to understand why development practices disconnect the water balance pathways that power stream-ecology. They also need to understand why a water-first approach to green infrastructure can reconnect the two."*

**As an elected representative, are you now wondering what these two statements mean in practice, and how they relate to Sustainable Service Delivery?**

With this introductory essay, my objective is simply to provide you with a conceptual framework, call it a mind map, that will help start you on your personal journey of discovery as an elected representative. As you gain an appreciation of the ways in which policy decisions play out, please keep this thought in the forefront of your thinking, ***the decisions that councils and boards make today ripple through time, for better or worse.***

If I now have your attention, let's shine the spotlight on streams. Have you considered that a stream system is the most important natural asset within a local government's domain of responsibility? Would knowing this make you more likely to champion effective "green infrastructure" policies that preserve the integrity of stream systems and thus provide higher levels of drainage service?

### Have you thought about how a stream corridor provides a "package of ecological services" where people live?

In clear language, the phrase "package of ecological services" refers to drainage, habitat and diversity, recreation, and enjoyment of property functions of a

stream corridor. This is language that municipal councils and regional boards should understand. Do the words resonate with you, as a responsible decision maker, and would they help you make informed policy choices?

Streams are a major focus for community involvement. Consider how much work stewardship groups do to improve conditions in streams. We can all visualize what a stream looks like. In comparison, how intuitively obvious is the generic phrase "natural asset"?

### Did you know that “the drainage service” has two interconnected components?

The engineered and natural components of “the drainage service” are municipal infrastructure and streams, respectively. Declining stream health is a way to think about the consequences of past actions and/or inaction at a land development policy level, and the associated cost implications for maintenance and management of the drainage service.

Land use alters the landscape. That is obvious, right. But there is an elephant in the room. It is the unfunded liability due to neglect of the drainage service. The cost of neglect grows over time. The consequence of neglect is an accumulating financial liability to fund creek channel stabilization and stream corridor revegetation in urban and rural settings.

The growing cost of neglect, combined with the urgency of the flood liability issue in particular, is the driver for linking municipal infrastructure asset management and stream health as "cause-and-effect".

### Weather extremes. Cold and hot. Floods, droughts, and fire.

Warmer and wetter winters. Longer and drier summers. You have heard these descriptions time and again in recent years. A new vocabulary of extremes describes the new climate reality (Figure 1).

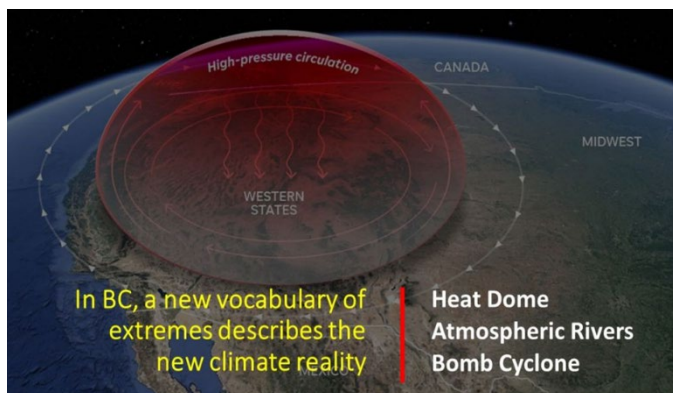


Figure 1

In the span of a generation, for example, my experience is that the expected duration of a summer drought has doubled from 3 months to 6 months, impacting on reliability of water supply as well as the survival of aquatic systems.

And when it rains heavily, stream systems blow out due to flash runoff. Do these challenges seem daunting? At the global scale, it feels like yes. At the local scale, perhaps not.

### Are you aware, for example, of a regulatory tool called a “soil depth requirement” for runoff control?

It is at the local creekshed scale where human actions on the land matter. Council and board decisions can ripple through time to make a difference, over time, to restore the water balance as land redevelops. But elected representatives must first grasp this core concept: land use activities short-circuit natural water balance pathways and thus impact on levels of service for drainage. The flip side of a problem is an opportunity.

Consider, for example, that requiring a minimum soil depth on every property would restore the “absorbent sponge” after land is subdivided and houses are built. Because the soil sponge holds water and releases it slowly, it is a foundation piece for sustaining both streamflow and fish in urban and suburban streams (Figure 2).



Figure 2

Learn about, and learn from, communities such as the Town of Comox that are striving to “get it right” through design with nature servicing practices. They are beacons of hope and inspiration.

### Does the foregoing make sense to you?

If what I have shared with you does make sense, then you are ready for the final piece in this essay which is Figure 3.





Figure 3

This presents the hierarchy of “green vocabulary” which **cascades from policy to outcome**. The four terms can also be viewed as a set of guiding principles to achieve water sustainability and higher levels of drainage service by designing with nature. It is a systems view.

Read, ponder, and absorb. After that, learn some more. **It is a process.** You will then be primed to make informed policy choices that achieve the goal of Sustainable Service Delivery in your community.

## What I would say to a new Council Perspective from a CAO

Doug Allin, Chief Administrative Officer, Spallumcheen Township

Welcome to local government and congratulations on the election results! There will be so much to unpack, and we only have 4 years!

When it comes to Asset Management and service delivery, I would provide the following overview to the Mayor and Council:



*In a complex and complicated political and legislative environment, municipal governments must focus, make sound decisions, and deliver services that meet with public expectations and regulatory requirements, protect the environment and are financially sustainable. The breadth of services delivered by local governments, that residents depend upon, is quite staggering. Most members of the public (and new councils), never fully understand the multitude of services that are operated by their municipality, the decisions required, associated financial*

*implications and the staff effort required to deliver services.*

***The Asset Management Investment Plan guides staff and council with smoothing of the effects on tax rates, economic growth, disaster protection, environmental protection, public health, and climate change resilience.***

***These are only a few of the benefits!***

As CAO, I would emphasize with a new Council, that these are delivered efficiently and effectively because of smart, dedicated, and hardworking staff at municipal hall who know our “business model”. The “business model” is based on the BC Framework for Sustainable Service Delivery and Council’s strategic priorities. The model provides staff with an understanding of who, what, when, where, why, and how we deliver services. To enable the full potential of staff, the model has documented processes, policies, and plans in place to support them and their work. I also create an empowering and supporting environment for them to thrive. Leadership from the CAO and Council is critical to ensuring staff can perform at their best and we trust they are doing their best to sustainably delivering services to community.

A key element of Staff’s role is the management and care for infrastructure. Reliable and resilient infrastructure provides the foundation for healthy communities and strong economies. Council also needs to make informed infrastructure investment decisions that align with our business model, letters patent and community charter obligations (“...providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community”). We develop asset management plans, policies, and strategies to inform and guide what we do and help to manage infrastructure. It can be easy for Councils to invest resources into “shiny new amenities” versus re-investing in the paving of roads or replacement of a culvert but not realizing the value to community health, infrastructure protection and economic loss when it comes to the roads and culverts. Throughout my career I heard many examples of Council’s approving the depletion of the roads capital reserves to build a new community asset with no plan or understanding of how to renew and reinvest into the existing infrastructure, which led to significant financial limitations and reduced service levels for the community for many years. At the end of the day, it is Council’s decision, and it is the responsibility of the public to ensure the folks they elect are identifying asset renewal and planning as part of the commitment to the community.

Based on my experiences, I always try to have Councils consider the long term in their decision-making by ensuring they have good information and policy to help

guide them. As a result, these Councils have clear understanding of our assets, the services they deliver and how to fund the operations, maintenance, and replacement in an endorsed long-term financial plan and strategy.

Councils will inevitably need to make tough choices and weigh the trade-offs between options, but by having good governance tools in place and a strong staff complement, the community can be assured that sound decisions are being made that are transparent and provide good value for money.

## What I would say to a new Council about Asset Management and Sustainable Service Delivery

### Perspective from a General Manager, Engineering & Public Works

*Bill Sims, General Manager Engineering & Public Works, City of Nanaimo*

Congratulations and welcome to the exciting world of local government! No, really! It's challenging, rewarding, and particularly important work, that affects the lives of every one of our citizens. In my experience, Council and staff join local government out of motivation to serve the public good – to build community, improve the lives of residents, and ensure financial, social, and environmental well-being into the future. Holding on to your ethic of service is critical to fill these goals.

A key consideration is intergenerational equity.

**This is finding the right balance between spreading the cost of services over citizens who benefit now and in the future without burdening future generations with the inability to sustain services.**

Frustration and challenges abound, including senior government off-loading core services, limited mechanisms for revenue, unrealistic public expectation or criticism, the tyranny of immediate noisy issues, and looming large expenditures for renewal and keeping lights on. Add to this the needs of an evolving world, action to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the uncertainty around this, and it can be overwhelming for all of us! Through it all, we need to thread our way, keeping an eye



on the future. Often, public misunderstanding of the role of local government can muddy the waters.

Local governments deliver services our residents rely upon daily. Everything from fire protection, police, recreation, and cultural activities, drinking water, sewage handling and garbage/recycling collection to streets, parks, and natural areas. The key idea is that we deliver services communally. Local governments do not serve customers as a business may. Communal services are those that everyone contributes toward, for the benefit of all. Upset residents may say “*I pay you to pick up my garbage, so you owe me that service*”, which misses the point. Everyone pays fees towards sanitation collection services, pooling funds for the best value service for everyone. It does not however guarantee specific individual service delivery. We are not a vending machine. There are responsibilities that go along with paying fees, such as getting your garbage to the curb on time, sorting recycling, and making sure your bins are accessible.

**The rationale is that everyone contributing funds toward a service is much more efficient than everyone activating the service individually.**

Local governments use infrastructure to deliver these services – from pools and fire stations to buried pipes, roadways, and natural areas. There are a remarkably diverse range of “infrastructure assets” that the public relies upon to be functional, affordable, and sustainable now and well into the future. The unfortunate side of relying upon infrastructure is that they deteriorate over time – potholes form, roofs leak, pipes collapse.

**The term at use in local government accounting for maintaining, renewing, and upgrading infrastructure is Asset Management.**

It is a core responsibility of a Council – enshrined in BC's Community Charter – to provide “*for the stewardship of the public assets of the community.*”

One of the greatest challenges facing local governments is that human nature wants new things. In the post-war days of optimistic expansion and subsidized infrastructure funding, municipalities built kilometres of new sewer, roads, and facilities, and became habituated to growth and expansion in new taxation to pay for ongoing operation. In many cases, this infrastructure is now coming due for renewal, creating a looming investment to continue to sustain services with inadequate funding sources to meet that need. Local government property tax upon which all the services we deliver depends make up about 10% of all taxes that citizens typically pay, while Federal and Provincial taxes make up the other 90%.



Providing continual service means continually renewing the infrastructure we rely upon to deliver those services. It is easy to lose sight of ‘boring old’ infrastructure renewal when faced with a generation-defining project like a new events centre. The new and shiny will always compete to attract attention and funding. Evolving community amenities are critical for wellbeing, attractiveness, and livability. There will be tension between maintaining and renewing yesterday’s “new and shiny” facilities and infrastructure with tomorrow’s amenities. The tension needs to be balanced by Councils with wisdom. This is probably one of the core duties of Council members in fulfilling their role of stewarding the community’s assets.

To help everyone, especially citizens, appreciate the balance - we must communicate, understand, and trade-off “levels of service,” – that is the degree to which we provide each service.

**It should be easy to understand that the level of service delivered is proportional to investment. Shouldn’t it?**

I think we do ourselves and our public a disservice by continuing to add services, improve service, and “do more with less” to the point where we become habituated to spreading resources too thin. Combined with the public’s expectation that taxes shouldn’t increase beyond the consumer price index, it’s no wonder municipal councils feel the squeeze!

Municipalities strive for excellent service to improve life for their citizens, often stretching budgets and themselves to do so. Opinions vary on where attention needs to focus. Do we understand levels of service and the risks of not providing/keeping up with operations and maintenance? Or do we build amenities for a growing community? If funding goes toward building new things, the old stuff continues to deteriorate and becomes more expensive to renew later. If all our attention is on renewal, attractiveness and livability of our community suffers.

Over a few decades, I’ve managed a parade of projects. Projects have a beginning, a middle, and an end. But the asset management parade never ends – it is cyclic. There is always another project, whether building a new amenity, renewing old pipes, or performing maintenance interventions to extend life of a bridge. I’ve come to realize a (perhaps self-evident) truth: we can’t solve all our infrastructure problems with a single project, a single Council term, or perhaps even a single generation. Our role is to pick up the challenge, advance it along, and then set it down for others to pick up. It’s critical to ensure we are facing the right direction – advancing and improving our community’s infrastructure, protecting it for future generations, and investing as much as possible so future

generations aren’t burdened with cost shocks or significant failures.

**Our role is to leave our communities a better place than we found them and pass the torch to the next generation.** Is there any higher calling than improving life for others in a spirit of service?

## What to say to a new Council about Asset Management?

### Perspective from a retired CFO and CAO

*Paul Murray, Prior CFO and CAO (retired), now Brentwood Advisory Group*

#### Built and Natural Assets are fundamentally important for each community



Local government exists to provide safe, sustainable, secure services in a predictable, cost-effective

manner. To do this, communities rely on assets like water, sewer, road, and drainage systems and they are not going away any time soon. These assets will still be here when our kids have grown up and have families of their own. Essential assets like these need to be kept in good shape so local governments can provide the services that our kids’ families will need in the future, just as we do today. **We all have an obligation to maintain and replace them as our community legacy.** That’s Asset Management.

#### Why this is so Important: It’s all about the Kids! (Appeal to the heart)

Replacing assets is kind of boring for a community and, consequently, for elected officials. It doesn’t usually help win votes. It’s regular business and easy to overlook during a short election term. So why is this important?

Children today represent 21% of the population but 100% of our future. **It’s all about our kids!**

Ask yourself: “Do I want to look after my kids and provide them with an opportunity to thrive in the future? Or do I want to saddle them with a significant financial obligation to replace community assets that were used up by the previous generation and have gone past their service life?”

**Appealing to the heart** will help engage community about the importance of spending more on asset replacement.

## How do we begin this? – Just Start!

Most municipalities in BC have taken the same path to where they are today. Assets have slowly been replaced over decades but, overall, they have gradually aged and have become depleted as current needs have taken priority over a long-term focus on next generations. Many community assets were also built with the benefit of senior levels of government assistance and that is not as much the case today.

There is a spending gap that has gradually risen over time, and we find in many instances that funding to replace assets is not substantially in place. This gap must be closed if we are committed to preserving the services that we have enjoyed at the same level for our kids. Only recently has the importance of taking this longer-term view come into focus.

If you answered the previous question with, “Yes, I want to provide my kids with the same great community legacy as I was privileged to benefit from,” the next practical question becomes, “How do we as a community close this gap?” This may appear to be a daunting task.

The good news is that there is still time to bridge this financial gap **gradually**, with a disciplined and continuous focus on increased spending. The approach does not have to be perfect, but a start is needed, however small. Refine your approach and your data as you go, but just begin and then continue.

If you do this and stay disciplined, you will eventually reach the level needed to protect those community assets for your kids and the future. **The answer is to just start!**

## Think Evolution, not Revolution

By putting this in context for the community, this can be a gradual process over time. Solving the issue overnight is not needed. Be consistent and clear. Think evolution; be gradual, connect the message and repeat. Include this conversation in master plans, yearly budget materials, annual reporting and during strategic planning. Keep appealing to the heart as a fundamental call to action.

Build momentum and be strategic. By being systematic and intentional, the task will become normalized. It will become less daunting and more achievable in the long run and evolve to become accepted business. Before you know it, you will have made some progress and momentum will keep the community moving forward.

## It takes Courageous Leadership

Council’s role is governance; it is strategic leadership, and responsible stewardship for the services and the infrastructure that make our communities unique and

amazing. Fundamental to that role is also protecting that legacy for future generations.

Taking this step forward will take courageous leadership and an appeal to the heart to convince communities of the importance of the long-term view.

## It’s all about the kids!

This an effective approach to move asset management into everyday, normal business for your community. It’s based on clear, consistent, and connected communication that is repeated over time.

**It takes work, but you just need to start.**

## What to say to a new Council about Asset Management?

### Perspective from an Asset Manager

*Kristy Bobbie, Asset Manager, City of Prince George*

#### How Asset Management helps our Council make decisions.

One of the key responsibilities of Council, as set out in BC’s Community Charter (Part 2, Section 7), is to provide for stewardship of the public assets of its community. This is why the City of Prince George (the City), has an Asset Management program; to ensure systems are in place to be able to provide Council with infrastructure related asset information to make informed, long-term decisions. This includes knowing the full lifecycle cost of owning an asset prior to approving it be built. For example, the City was recently approached by a well-respected community foundation with a proposal to build a ‘destination park’. They proposed to build the major features of the park and donate them to the City to own and take care of in perpetuity.

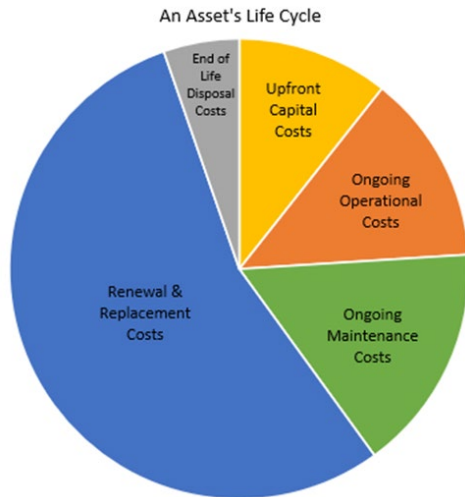


#### Before any Council decides to jump on an opportunity that sounds like a great idea, there are questions that need to be asked and answered:

1. Do we already have assets that provide a similar service to our community?
2. Are these existing assets in need of repair or coming up to the end of their service life and need money to be replaced?
3. Donated assets can be a great opportunity to add services for our community to enjoy, but what are the other upfront costs that the City (and ultimately the taxpayer) will have to pay for?

4. How much money will it cost over the whole life of those assets for annual operations and maintenance, eventual replacement, and disposal?

**It is the ongoing, whole life cost, of an asset that is the eye opener.** Often, we pay most attention to the upfront costs and forget that those costs are only a fraction of the money that needs to be spent on an asset over its lifetime.



Asking staff to provide you with a full life cycle cost analysis is the key to ensuring decisions about new assets are made with all the facts in mind. Existing and future generation taxpayers are depending on you, as today's Council, to make the right decisions for the community and to spend our limited financial resources wisely. This includes knowing what existing assets need to be replaced and when or when not to move forward on a big shiny project.

## What to say to a new Council?

### Perspective from planning and sustainability

*Kim Fowler, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Long Range Planning, Sustainability and Energy, Regional District of Nanaimo*



What is AM? Another one of those projects we don't have time to start! Nope, **your local government is already doing it.** The question, however, is how well and the process improvement is being implemented.

The analogy of a house is often used to explain asset management – you buy a new house, usually nowadays with a big mortgage. You work hard at paying off that mortgage early because it saves a lot

of interest, and who wants to pay more to the bank?! **But you also must maintain that house.** It's easy in the first decade as everything is new. Wise asset managers, though, put away just a little bit every year from the construction of a new asset, so the maintenance and repair bills aren't a shock to budgets. Very wise asset managers put away just a little bit a year for replacement. Replacement funds, you say; it's decades away!! The average cost in Canada for a new roof is \$15,000, new furnace or heat pump is \$5-8,000, new windows are about \$11,000 and new vinyl siding is \$15,000. Just those items total almost \$50,000. How are you going to pay for that? An asset management plan, of course.

Only 20% of a new asset, like a house, is the upfront capital cost. The remaining 80% is operations and maintenance, which would include electrical, water & sewer utilities, cleaning the gutters and basic repairs. Regular maintenance has proven to extend the life of assets, which saves money over the longer term. So do green, sustainable assets, such as ENERGYGUIDE rated appliances, green rating standards like Built Green, heat pumps, water efficient taps and shower heads, and even a vegetable or permaculture garden. So, a bit more capital cost up front will save over 4x its value on average in operations and maintenance costs (using the 20/80 rule noted above).

Asset management can be done on simple spreadsheets and then integrated as an essential part of your capital plans. **How do you do a budget if you don't know what assets you have, their condition and when they need to be replaced?** Climate change is increasing risk by damaging assets, like bridges, roads, and stormwater sewers, 20-30% more than historically. And these assets are critical to the basic functioning of our communities.

And while the focus of your asset management plan should be integration with your long-term capital budget, don't overlook the "master asset management plan", otherwise known as your Official Community Plan (OCP). OCPs set the locations and standards of future growth in your community, and as a result, set the core infrastructure needs and their associated costs. Higher densities mean more taxpayers to fund the costs of roads, water, sewer, police, fire fighters, recreation centres, playing fields – just to name a few of the 100+ services your local government provides for its community.

**So, look after your house!** Lead a key legacy of your council or board by being a good steward of your community assets. You'll provide a consistent, reliable level of service that saves \$millions over time and builds community resilience in an increasingly risky climate.



## What to tell a new Council about Asset Management?

### Perspective from a retired Public Works Manager

*Joe McGowan retired Manager, Public Works,  
City of Cranbrook and trainer*

The role of a municipal councillor is extremely challenging given today's issues. Demands for new or enhanced municipal services without significant increases to property taxes and utility fees is the situation faced by local governments be they municipal, regional, or improvement districts. Common to this scenario is an expectation of existing and new councillors to deliver services or projects that will be a legacy.



Looking for something tangible to associate a name to is a common theme for many councillors. After all, residents receive existing water, sewer, drainage, solid waste, transportation, parks, and recreation facilities that provide a measure of service. For the most part, it is rare to experience a disruption of these services, water flows from their taps, their toilets flush, and they can travel to wherever they want in the community.

### **These services are taken for granted, they function as expected, so why worry?**

It is common for councillors to have the opinion that if something isn't broke, why are we discussing it? The rationale of most councillors is that we will deal with it when it breaks or needs repair. The challenge occurs when there is an issue, what part of it do we fix, how do we fix it, and more significantly, where do you find the funds?

### **A community without water, sewer, or passable roads does not attract residents.**

The Community Charter states that *"The purposes of a municipality include .... providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community"*. Simply stated, this means that councillors and senior staff have a responsibility to manage existing as well as future municipal assets within their respective communities.

**Our municipal infrastructure will not last forever.**

### **The absence of knowledge of the current state of infrastructure results in poor decisions.**

Replacement or upgrading of aging infrastructure can be extraordinarily expensive if not planned for properly. A typical response to emergency situations often results in little or no difference in service delivery to the community than was provided before the failure. Reactive responses often lead to missed opportunities for cost savings, level of service improvement, or improved capacity needed for growth and development.

An effective Asset Management (AM) program is simply knowing what water, sewer, transportation, and building and recreational assets your community has, the condition of those assets, your current community service needs, and the future development of these services as your community continues to grow and develop. Don't forget your natural capital assets.

**Asset Management knowledge greatly reduces the cost of unplanned repairs** while providing the framework to support upgrading or to replace existing infrastructure that is required to support a higher or more robust level of service at lower and predictable costs.

Municipal staff can provide their council with well thought out and supported recommendations. These recommendations form effective guidance tools to properly address what needs to be done, in the correct order it needs to be done, at the time when it needs to be done; essentially a 'Strategic Plan'.

### **All this invaluable information should be presented in a well-documented and transparent manner.**

The most significant benefit for councils and staff is the generation of relevant long range (5, 10, 20, 50 & 100 yr.) capital and financial plans which support proper consideration of competing resources in an order logical manner.

I believe many councillors are intimidated when it comes to infrastructure, **and they need not be**. They don't need to know the inner workings, they need to make Asset Management a priority, communicate that priority to staff and then resource it. Be champions for Asset Management in the community.

Councils may say it is too complex. Council job is not the 'inner workings' details but the service and resourcing. Staff do the rest.

## There is no need to re-invent the wheel.

Your municipality for the most part already has much of the needed information within its 'As Constructed' records library, or information collected during routine maintenance and operations. All the Asset Management tools a municipality needs already exist.

When procedures are properly followed, staff will clearly identify what assets your community has, the service and level of service it provides, the relative condition and age of each asset and its expected remaining lifespan. Logical decisions to determine what should be done, when, and how can be made based on data and knowledge. This not only includes replacement of assets, but also includes timely cost-effective maintenance that can extend the life of existing asset investments and defer major replacements that may not be needed.

## So, how do you start your municipality going down this obvious path?

It is simple:

- Encourage and support your staff to fully engage in the Asset Management (AM) process using provincially and internationally available resources.
- Encourage your engineering, public works, and accounting staff to involve themselves in Asset Management (AM) organizations. Support their attendance and active participation at relevant industry events.

Asset Management concepts have been around for as long as the first brick road was constructed by the Romans. Today's challenge is that not every municipal staff member has been exposed to the well thought out and simple software-based processes which are available now. Although, knowledgeable of the water, sewer, transportation, and building assets in their community, many staff are not aware of how the information that they already possess can be used to support predictable expenditures and increased levels of service.

Your engineering and public works people, working with outside expertise if needed, can determine the condition of each of the infrastructure assets. This allows for an estimate of the asset's remaining life. Knowing what assets your municipality has, and the expected life span of each asset allows your staff to determine where the immediate challenges are and to identify when challenges can reasonably be expected. Knowing what needs to be done and when, allows staff to estimate costs required to modify, upgrade, or replace the asset. This valuable information is then incorporated into strategic and long-

range capital and financial plans. Relevant information allows you to obtain best value for money spent.

## This model will see your limited tax revenue go farther and allow you to do more.

Avoid passing all asset management decision making to outside consultants. Your municipal staff has a great deal of knowledge. With specialty consultant support over time, they will be able to properly analyze the information and provide well thought out recommendations to council that are fully supported by facts.

Asset Management is simply using the information your municipality already has, to:

- determine what you have,
- what condition it is in,
- how long it will last, and
- what you can do to best meet the future infrastructure needs of your municipality in a fiscally responsible manner.

The process is simple, and the resources are in place to assist.

***Being a champion of proactive, informed, and intelligent asset management is a strong legacy for any leader to leave and is one that can build a foundation for generations.***

## Artificial Intelligence: Our Newest Asset Management Tool

Gracelyn Shannon, Manager, Operations and Maintenance,  
Town of Gibsons



*Note from the Author: I am not affiliated with any AI companies and I'm still learning how to apply it in a meaningful way for the Town of Gibsons. I wrote this article out of interest, and a belief that it will be having a significant impact on our roles as asset managers in the coming years. I am still learning*

*how to apply the many different AI tools out there.*

*The tools I reference in this article are open source and free, from the company OpenAI ([openai.com](https://openai.com)).*

*Other interesting AI uses can be found at There's an AI for That ([theresanaiforthat.com](https://theresanaiforthat.com)).*

We start with a poem.

*Shall Canada now make use of new AI  
to optimize their asset way of life?  
Though hard this task, with smart machines apply  
to keep their money, with scarce strife.*

*For, with an eye to problem's gold solution  
we tasked this task to thinking great and large,  
to bring all issues in due resolution,  
an' garner more sway than barge.*

*Thus, all this tech shall aid our dealings wise,  
unearth towns' improper balance sheets,  
we focus our most prudent goals and rise  
'gainst the criminal minds in wicked fleets.*

*Each city must not be so unaware,  
and zoom out to view the world they left in;  
for climate change brings crisis to share  
and mends a broken system, spent.*

*Now Canada's assets shall be seen  
for dreams of greatness, thoughts grand and mean.*

### **ChatGPT, OpenAI**

The poem is written by Artificial Intelligence (AI) with the prompt: "Write a Shakespearean sonnet about municipal asset management in Canada, how AI is going to change the industry, and how we're going to have to zoom out and really think about the goals that we are trying to achieve in this trying time. Consider climate change and a potentially broken system."

In this article I look at just one prominent open source AI developer called OpenAI. They developed a language-based tool called ChatGPT which I focus on here, along with images generated by another tool of theirs, DALL·E2. These are two of many examples of free AI tools that are starting to be used in businesses, software development, data analysis, report writing, and more.

Let's explore.

### **How can AI help you this week?**

What are you putting off this week? If, like me, there's a policy, email, report, contract, or summary you're putting off, AI might be able to help.

I had learned to tune out the term "AI". People use the term as a catch all to mean anything automated, generative, or suspiciously-smart. Then, I started to play with "DALL·E2". DALL·E2 is a free site that will generate an image based on any prompt you can think of. It is only limited by your own ability to creatively describe an image.

DALL·E2 was developed by OpenAI. OpenAI has now also launched a tool called ChatGPT ("Generative Pre-trained Transformer"). ChatGPT is a language-based software that is learning about conversations and how to better understand language over time.

After having a few weeks to play around with ChatGPT, I have found a few ways it has at least broken the procrastination block on some responses, reports, and summaries I had. What I see so far, is untapped potential that could change our industry.

In the last couple of weeks I have asked ChatGPT to:

- **Write a newsletter article** for municipal asset management professionals about the benefits of AI for the industry,
- **Write a summary of the key points** of a WorkSafeBC policy based on a link to the regulation,
- **Write a municipal asset management policy,**
- **Rewrite the lyrics** of "How You Remind Me" by Nickelback to reflect the challenges that cities are currently facing,
- **Write a recipe** for the remaining ingredients [listed] in my fridge, and
- **Describe the concept of asset management,** aimed at someone who is not familiar with the concept, using a metaphor with a prop.

I have limited knowledge of the tool at this point, but I intend to learn more about it and share in future Newsletters how free AI tools can also be used to analyze data, create schedules, develop programs and scripts, and edit documents.

### **An Interview with the Artificial Intelligence Tool ChatGPT**

The following interview is transcribed, word for word, based on my questions posed to ChatGPT.

**Gracelyn Q: What might ChatGPT be used for by a city employee?**

**ChatGPT A:** ChatGPT could be used by a city employee to communicate with citizens and fellow employees, create and organize city documents, respond to citizen inquiries requests for service, and provide guidance on city policy, programs, and services. Additionally, ChatGPT could be used for automating routine tasks such as scheduling and routing service requests, automatically creating reminders for city events, or providing up-to-date information about city services.





Figure 1: DALL·E2 Photo using prompt: "futuristic art of a city employee using ChatGPT to do data analysis"

**Gracelyn Q:** Describe asset management levels of service to a 6 year old.

**ChatGPT A:** Asset management is like having an organized closet, where everything has its place. Level 1 is like having a place for all of your toys and clothes so you can find what you need. Level 2 is like having your parents help you organize your closet, so you can find the things you need even faster. Level 3 is like having your parents buy a special box for all of your important things, so you can keep them safe. Level 4 is like having your parents hire someone to make sure your closet stays neat and organized. Level 5 is like having your parents come to help when you need to find something really quickly. Level 6 is like having a magical box that can always find whatever you need right away!

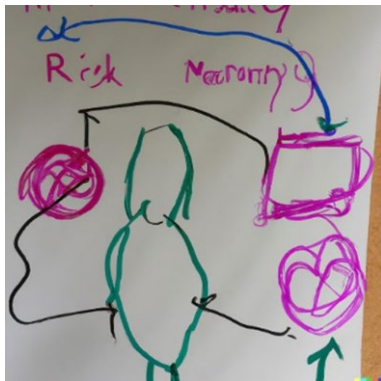


Figure 5: "A 4-year-old's drawing of the concept of risk management." Image generated by OpenAI tool DALL·E2 using quoted prompt.

**Gracelyn Q:** What is the role of humans in a future where AI is used to produce the bulk of the documents and data analysis?

**ChatGPT A:** The role of humans with a future where AI is used to produce the bulk of the documents and data analysis would be to provide guidance and oversight. Humans will still be needed to evaluate the results of AI and offer insights into how they can be improved, as well

as give input on any decisions that need to be made. Humans would also need to oversee safety protocols and institute appropriate ethical standards to ensure AI systems are not causing any unintended harm. Additionally, humans would need to be responsible for the development, maintenance, and training of AI systems, as well as any other tasks that require human intuition and creativity.



Figure 7: DALL·E2 image generated with prompt "photorealistic macrolense future of humanity with ai-centered workplaces."

**Gracelyn Q:** What are the limitations of ChatGPT?

**ChatGPT A:**

5. ChatGPT is limited to certain topics due to its current datasets and training.
6. ChatGPT provides contextual conversations with limited coherence in fluency.
7. It is unable to represent complex knowledge, facts, or concepts.
8. It does not learn intentionally from the conversations it is involved in, making it difficult to build a knowledgebase.
9. ChatGPT cannot recognize human emotions, making it difficult to respond to user moods or feelings.

**Gracelyn Q:** What future updates can we expect for ChatGPT?

**ChatGPT A:** ChatGPT is still in its early stages and development, so it's difficult to predict future updates. However, we can expect to see more sophisticated dialogue capabilities, additional training data, and improved usability. In the future, we may also see additional natural language processing (NLP) algorithms being built in to enhance ChatGPT's capabilities. Developers may also work to optimize and enhance the technology to make it more accessible and useful to businesses.

## Conclusion

We are at another technological turning point. Software is becoming more accessible, more usable, and more intelligent. But, just like any powerful tool, AI will only be as useful as the quality of the inputs, interpretations, and goals. When it's not about having the right answer anymore, users need to transition to develop a deeper understanding of the issues, our humanity, and shared goals.

The value you bring to your own communities will be based on your ability to develop unique and well-formed questions, invite insights from different specialties, and connect with those in your industry.

### How exciting is that?

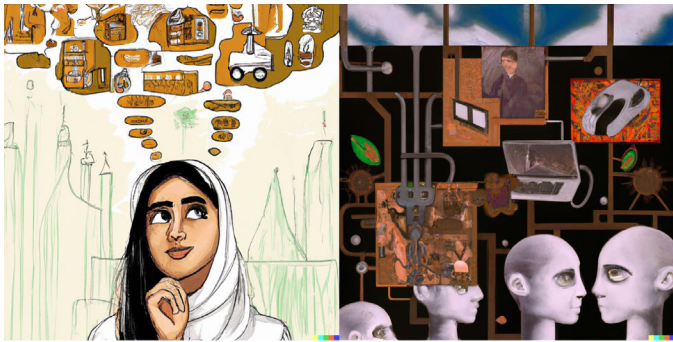


Figure 2: Two photos generated from the same DALL·E2 prompt "detailed art of a hopeful future, with in tact infrastructure, AI and humans working well together, and humans can just worry about their stupid human problems."

Gracelyn is the Manager of Operations and Maintenance at the Town of Gibsons. You can contact her through [gracelyn@gibsons.ca](mailto:gracelyn@gibsons.ca) or at [gracelyn@persephoneconsulting.ca](mailto:gracelyn@persephoneconsulting.ca)

## Asset Management BC Annual Conference a Great Success

What a treat to again be able to see friends, meet new people, network, and socialize and, oh yes, listen, learn, and participate in two days of sessions with keynote speakers, and a variety of topics on our asset management journeys at our **Asset Management BC 2022 conference**.

140 interested people enjoyed the conference and networking. We especially want to recognize the participation of 40 representatives of our First Nations Communities across BC and learning about their asset management challenges.

The conference theme was **'People, Places and Purpose'**. The first day was led off by Ron Matiussi, prior CAO of the City of Kelowna. Ron walked us through re-establishing a community after the loss of the Town administration, all

buildings, files, and most records in the fire that destroyed the entire Town of Lytton BC. Many asset management lessons were learned from that presentation.

A key presentation was the 90-minute panel on the 30-year background to asset management. The panel presentation, engaging 4 long-term experts in asset management, walked us through the milestones, key drivers, and antidotal stories of how we got to where we are today. The panel presentation, with funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), was recorded and presented live across Canada.

Photo of History of AM Panel: L to R: Glen Brown, chair; Wally



Wells, Dr. Guy Felio, Reg Andres, Konrad Siu.

The second day was led off by Paul Murray who has many years of experience in finance and municipal leadership as Chief Finance Officer and Chief Administrative Officer in several different local governments in BC. Paul brought us his insights into the value of the asset management process for decisions making and working with local Councils.

David Allen, Executive Director of Asset Management BC closed the conference by issuing all the attendees a challenge.

**"You have heard and seen the vision, passion, and results of thirty years of hard work across Canada to get us to where we are today. Your homework assignment is to go back to your communities and create the next 30 years with the same vision and passion moving forward."**

All presentations were recorded and are available on the AMBC website at [assetmanagementbc.ca](https://assetmanagementbc.ca)

### Asset Management BC 2023 conference

Mark **November 8 & 9, 2023** on your calendar for the Asset Management BC 2023 conference. We will be returning to the Radisson Vancouver airport hotel where we were in 2018 and 2019. This is the right time to ensure the conference is both on your calendar and in your budget.

**See you in November!**

## Asset Management BC introduces an AWARD program starting in 2022

Glen Brown, Chair of the partnership committee of AMBC introduced the new award program at the annual conference in November of 2022.

### #OurAssetsMatter Awards Ceremony

*“**Asset Management BC**, established in 2008, is the greater community of any person, organization or agency engaged in, or has an interest in, asset management. Asset Management BC’s vision is Sustainable Service Delivery, whereby community services are delivered in a social, economic, and environmentally responsible manner that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Its mission is, consistent with the [Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework](#), to learn, educate, share, and collaborate asset management best practices through a community of practice.*

**Asset Management BC** has established ‘OurAssetsMatter’ Recognition Awards.

The ‘OurAssetsMatter’ Award recognizes and celebrates the actions/activities of individuals and organizations that demonstrate leadership, passion, and excellence in meeting the vision and mission of Asset Management BC. The award is designed to profile asset management champions who have given back to the asset management community, advanced the asset management industry and/or provided leadership in asset management. This year, 2022, is the first year these awards are offered.”

### Award for Sustainable Service Delivery Champion – Organization

This category recognizes an organization that demonstrates leadership, passion, and excellence in meeting the vision and mission of Asset Management BC within their respective organization and towards the greater asset management community of practice in BC.

#### The 2022 winner is the Municipal Natural Asset Initiative (MNAI)

*“From a single initiative in the Town of Gibsons 5 years ago, MNAI has firmly established natural asset management as an essential component of asset management, and as legitimate field of practice in Canada, with sound methodologies, documented outcomes, a rapidly growing cadre of adherents, support from all three levels of government, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and many other organizations.*

*Effective asset management requires collaboration across professional and organizational entities. Natural asset management also requires this, and more given that most services from nature are best considered at a watershed or ecosystem level that typically extends far beyond the ownership or jurisdiction of a single local government. MNAI has embodied partnership since its inception.*

*Making an environmental case for the preservation of natural assets is straightforward. Making a quantifiable financial and risk management case for their preservation in a municipal context is challenging and requires substantial innovation. MNAI has adapted established methodologies to ensure that natural assets, which are complex in their role in service delivery,*

*context-specific, and present novel considerations, can be effectively integrated and considered into asset management. The levels at which natural assets operate are interdisciplinary; as such, MNAI’s approach has also need to value and coordinate expertise, authorities, and advocates from across disciplines and adapt to address the fluid needs of the practice. The approach helps to value the services provided by nature.*

*MNAI now has 28 asset management projects across BC. Each has education and awareness as a built-in component and provides an avenue to highlight the importance of nature to financial and asset management as well as conservation. MNAI publishes and shares report findings through its many partner organizations and on [mnai.ca](#); by providing openly accessible information and tools other interested parties have been able to learn, gain support, and contribute to establishing norms and practices to manage natural assets in BC and beyond.”*



Brian Bedford presenting AWARD to Roy Brooke,  
Executive Director of MNAI



## The Sustainable Service Delivery Champion - Individual

This category recognizes an individual who demonstrates leadership, passion and excellence in meeting the vision and mission of Asset Management BC within their respective organization and towards the greater asset management community of practice in BC.

### The Winner is Wally Wells, retiring Executive Director of AMBC

*"The name Wally Wells is synonymous with asset management in Canada. From his early work in Ontario with Dillon Consulting, his involvement with, and as President of the Canadian Public Works Association, to his involvement in the development of the Technology Road Map (TRM) in 2004, Wally has been a voice and champion for asset management and supporting the concept of sustainable service delivery. A key recommendation from the TRM was to establish the National Round Table for Sustainable Infrastructure (NRTSI), which came to fruition in 2007. After 'retiring', Wally and his wife Beverley relocated to Nanaimo, BC to enjoy west coast living. In his 'retirement'. His passion and commitment in advancing asset management continued. Wally was a key individual in the early development of Asset Management BC (AMBC). As Executive Director, most, if not all BC local governments have benefitted from Wally's friendly and approachable manner, knowledge, and desire to help advance asset management practices.*

*Wally, currently Asset Management Master, Mentor & Coach with AMBC is a true ambassador of asset management in Canada. Through his passion and commitment in supporting sustainable service delivery through asset management, he has been instrumental in building asset management principles, awareness, and best practices over the past 3 decades – the very foundation that allows Canadian local governments to advance asset management practices within their respective communities. His impact is recognized internationally, nationally, provincially, and locally. Despite his 'retired' status, Wally is considered an asset management mentor & champion to many of the current asset management champions in Canada.*

*Congratulations Wally and congratulations MNAI (from chair Glen Brown)*

**These will be annual awards through AMBC. Consider your candidates for the 2023 award.**



(Left to Right) Brian Bedford, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Andy Wardell Co-chair AMBC, Wally Wells (Award Recipient), retiring Executive Director of AMBC, Glen Brown, Chair Partnership Committee of AMBC, Doug Allin, Co-chair of AMBC, David Allen, Executive Director of AMBC.



## Why Your Team Should Attend the CNAM 2023 Conference in Fredericton

Leanne Brannigan, Chairperson CNAM, Manager, Corporate Asset Management, Region of Peel, ON

### It's time to start thinking about attending CNAM's 17th Annual and 2nd Hybrid Conference!

This year it is in Fredericton, New Brunswick from Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> to Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The conference theme is "Crafting Resilient Communities".



Attending a CNAM conference does not simply benefit the individual registered, it will also positively impact the municipality, organization, or company of the attendee.

## Reasons to attend:

- **Awareness** – Having a presence at the conference can give positive visibility to your municipality, organization or company and ensure your part of the important industry conversations and have a proverbial “seat at the table”.
- **Networking** – With industry leaders from across Canada and beyond. Attending can help you stay relevant, providing vital leads, connections, ideas, and new connections post conference.
- **Education** – Having multiple team members present, is cost-effective, and means that they can divide and conquer to attend different workshops, plenaries, and concurrent sessions to have a pulse on key industry topics, trends, and changes, all of which can be brought back to benefit your municipality, organization or company long term.
- **Growth Opportunity** – It has been a difficult few years. Your team member(s) are ambassadors of your municipality, organization or company, and participation shows them a vote of confidence in the work they are doing and their importance. This will not only provide benefits for the above reasons but give the individual(s) a growth opportunity in the industry. It adds to a positive work relationship and could potentially help in job retention.
- **Lastly, Fredericton is Fantastic** - Fredericton provides the classic Maritime experience delegates know and love, enhanced by a thriving music and cultural scene, an unparalleled cluster of authentic experiences and advanced technology. Add in a close-knit, walkable downtown, kilometers of green space alongside the majestic Wolastoq / Saint John River and you will discover a perfect combination of history, culture, and unique experiences.

Locals are proud of their dynamic community and diversity of the city. All the things that make Fredericton, New Brunswick a great place to live also make it a great place to meet.

Fredericton is rich in history, dynamic culture, and natural beauty. Within a five-block section of the historic downtown you'll find the world-class Beaverbrook Art Gallery, National Historic Sites like the Historic Garrison District, Christ Church Cathedral, the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, and some of the finest Victorian architecture in the country – along with stunning gardens, an idyllic riverfront trail, live theatre, fine dining, fabulous festivals, excellent evening entertainment, working artisans, and unique shopping.

With Fredericton's central location, the rest of New Brunswick is a travelers' paradise. You can enjoy fabulous and affordable adventures while spending your nights in the capital city. Whether you are a nature lover, adventure seekers, sightseers, history buffs, shoppers or dining aficionados, there is something for you in Fredericton!

**Early bird registration is open now – so go online to secure your spot [cnam.ca](https://cnam.ca)**

## Upcoming Events

### Note: COVID-19

*Due to COVID-19 requirements for social distancing, many events have moved to 'virtual' platforms.*

**Check Association websites to confirm details.**



### Asset Management BC

November 8-9, 2023

Annual Asset Management Conference  
Radisson Hotel, Richmond BC

[assetmanagementbc.ca](https://assetmanagementbc.ca)

**Registration on CivicInfo:** [civicinfo.bc.ca](https://civicinfo.bc.ca)

### Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

February 7-10, 2023

Sustainable Communities Conference  
Westin Hotel, Ottawa, ON

[fcm.ca](https://fcm.ca)

### Municipal Insurance Association of BC (MIABC)

April 4-6, 2023

Annual Risk Management conference  
JW Marriott Parq, Vancouver BC

[miabc.org](https://miabc.org)

### Recreation Facilities Association of BC

April 24-27, 2023

RFABC Annual Conference and Trade show  
Lakeside Resort and Convention Centre  
Penticton BC

[rfabc.com](https://rfabc.com)

### Canadian Network of Asset Managers (CNAM)

May 1-4, 2023

CNAM Annual Conference and Trade (Hybrid)  
Hilton Garden Inn and Fredericton Convention Center  
Fredericton, NB

[cnam.ca](https://cnam.ca)

**BC Water & Waste Association (BCWWA)**

May 14–16, 2023

Annual Conference and Trade Show

Penticton, BC

[bcwwaconference.org](http://bcwwaconference.org)

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)**

May 25-28, 2023

Annual Conference and Trade Show

Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre

Toronto, ON

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

**Government Finance Officers Association of BC (GFOA BC)**

May 31-June 2, 2023

Annual Conference

Fairmont Whistler Hotel and convention Centre

Whistler BC

[gfoabc.ca](http://gfoabc.ca)

**Local Government Management Association of BC (LGMA)**

June 13-15, 2023

Annual Conference and Trade show

Nanaimo, BC

[lgma.ca](http://lgma.ca)

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

September 18-22, 2023

Annual Convention and Trade Show

Vancouver Convention Centre

Vancouver BC

[ubcm.ca](http://ubcm.ca)

**Public Works Association of BC**

September 26 -27, 2023

Joint annual conference and trade show

Penticton Convention Centre

Penticton BC

[pwabc.ca](http://pwabc.ca)

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